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GEOHERMAL DEVELOPMENT IN MEXICO

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Since 1973, geothermal electrical generation has been a reality in Mexico at the Cerro Prieto field. Two units of 37.5 MWe have been operated successfully by the Comisión Federal de Electricidad. Total production through the end of 1976 was 1,953,375 kWh. The prospects for geothermal generation in the future are good. The Cerro Prieto field will be exploited in increasing amounts as indicated by the new units that are being planned.

UNIT	CAPACITY (MWe)	YEAR OF INITIAL OPERATION
CP-I-3	37.5	1979
CP-I-4	37.5	1979
CP-I-5	30.0	1980
CP-II-1	55.0	1981
CP-II-2	55.0	1981
CP-II-3	55.0	1982
CP-II-4	55.0	1983

By the year 1983, there will be 400 MWe installed at Cerro Prieto. The well drilling program for Cerro Prieto calls for 14 new production wells during 1977 and 22 new production wells and four exploration wells in 1978.

In the central volcanic region of Mexico, an exploration well was drilled this year at Los Azufres, Michoacán, down to 2184 m. The well is producing and the temperature is on the order of 300°C. Exploration at other sites in the same region will be increased during the next few years.

In the research and development area, the recent establishment of the Instituto de Investigaciones Eléctricas has created a stimulus to geothermal energy research. Under contract from the Comisión Federal de Electricidad, research and development projects are being carried out related to scaling, two phase-flow, separator efficiencies, microseismicity techniques, reinjection feasibility of the disposed water, and recovery of chemical byproducts. The Organization of American States is partially supporting a study of the viability of desalination and geothermal power generation process coupling. A greater number of projects is expected to be carried out next year, since the utilization of geothermal energy is to increase in the future.