



# African Energy Solar Success Series

## News in the New Year

### MORNINGSTAR PRICES UP AND DOWN

Morningstar is known worldwide for their reliability and efficiency in solar charge controllers. We have all enjoyed their TS and TS-MPPT units. They are what an American calls “bulletproof”. They are easy to install, tolerant of abuse and overload and reverse polarity and all of the other things that happen in real life installations. The only challenge has been the price.

Morningstar has listened to our concerns and reacted by introducing the ECO line of controllers – both PWM and MPPT. The ECO-Pulse has almost all of the features of the PS controller, plus lighting control and optional digital display. The ECO-Boost looks a lot like the TS-MPPT but includes load control, lighting control and USB ports for phone charging. Max VOC is 120 volts. These units are available at fantastic pricing and will cover most of our charge controller requirements below 45 amps.

As a result of these new controllers, Morningstar will be raising prices on the TS line – both PWM and MPPT. Look for price increases as we move through the old stock. This means that the Morningstar controllers above 45 amps will be more expensive, while the ECO line below 45 amps will be cheaper. Morningstar is almost ready for the launch of their inverter/charger, and when that is complete, we can expect some larger charge controllers from them.

### OUTBACK GETS A NEW PARENT

Any industry growing as fast as the solar business should expect a lot of mergers and acquisitions. Outback was sold to Alpha Technologies back in 2010 and late in 2018 Alpha itself was purchased by Enersys, the battery giant. It seems like this is a positive change for Outback. They will continue to operate independently from Arlington, Washington

in the United States. Alpha GmbH was not part of the Enersys acquisition and we understand that it will become a distributor of Alpha and Outback equipment in Europe. We hope this new parent helps Outback to continue growing and we congratulate them on the merger!

### SCHNEIDER SWITCHES IT UP

Schneider Electric, the owner of the Xantrex brand and the manufacturer of the XW line of inverters has also made some internal changes which take effect in 2019. The solar division will now operate as a single business unit worldwide, rather than being integrated into Schneider offices in various countries. Look for faster deliveries, clearer market channels and more focused product development as all of the solar guys get under one roof.

### RELION LITHIUM NOW AT AFRICAN ENERGY

“Be not the first by whom the new is tried, nor the last to lay the old aside”. My mother taught me that couplet and it has served me well in life. After appropriate hesitation and comparison, we are now offering lithium batteries manufactured by Relion, a great company in South Carolina, USA. We will send a longer mail on this, but the short version is that we looked for a lithium product with a built in battery management system, that looks and feels like a lead acid battery, that uses safer lithium iron phosphate, and that is manufactured by a US company. Relion and Simpliphi tick all of those boxes, and we offer both, but have a preference at this point for Relion. Their products are on our Houston price list and we would be happy to talk with you about them. We look forward to shipping out Relion batteries in 2019.