

UNLIKE BROAD MARKET INDEXES, NEX DELIVERED A NEGATIVE 2014

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The WilderHill New Energy Global Innovation Index, or NEX, retreated 3.3% in 2014, with energy conversion, energy efficiency and solar shares weighing especially hard on the global low-carbon benchmark.

The NEX closed 31 December 2014 at 178.66, compared with a close of 184.73 for 2013. Its 2014 top was 218.94 on 6 March, and it bottomed at 172.16 on 16 December. Its all-time high was 455 on 31 December 2007.

Broader market indexes delivered positive returns for the year just ended, but with notable regional variation: US-centric gauges such as the Nasdaq Composite Index and S&P 500 Index surged 13.4% and 11.4%, respectively, while the MSCI AC World Index of global stocks managed a meagre 2% gain.

NEX wind companies logged a 0.7% improvement in 2014. Biofuels and biomass were up 0.2%. Energy storage was off 3.7%. Solar dimmed 5.9%. Energy efficiency fell 8.4%, and energy conversion slumped 16.3%.

The best-performing NEX stock of 2014 was Hong Kong-traded Hanergy Thin Film Power Group Ltd., which appreciated 260%, from the equivalent of USD 0.1 to USD 0.36 per share. Hanergy's steepest climb occurred in December, when it disclosed equity transfers with other affiliates of Hanergy Holdings and announced the construction of a 300MW thin-film fabrication plant in Hunan province, China.

US microinverter producer Enphase Energy Inc. was the second-best performing index component, with a 125% price gain. After opening 2013 at \$6.34 per share, Enphase rode a series of contract announcements and positive financial reports to a year high of \$17.39 on 17 September.

Plug Power Inc., the US manufacturer of fuel-cell driven forklift vehicles, ended 2014 as NEX's third-best performer with a 94% gain. Plug Power enjoyed a lengthy period as a stock-blogger favorite after announcing a multi-site sales and maintenance contract in February with Wal-Mart Stores Inc.

NEX's list of top-five gainers in 2014 was rounded out by biodiesel producer Energy Absolute PCL (Thailand; 69%) and geothermal project developer Energy Development Corp. (Philippines; 55%).

For the second consecutive year, the worst NEX performer was US advanced biofuel producer KiOR Inc. which filed for bankruptcy liquidation on 10 November. The stock lost 99.6% of its value in 2014 after falling 74% in 2013.

GT Advanced Technologies Inc. a US maker of synthetic sapphire with solar and high-efficiency lighting applications, also entered bankruptcy in 2014 and saw its share price crash 96%. GT became involved in a highly publicized dispute with Apple Inc., with which it entered into a contract to supply screen material for future Apple products.

Shares of US renewable oil maker Solazyme Inc. were the third-worst NEX performer last year, down 76%. Solazyme on 5 November reported quarterly earnings that missed both sales and earnings expectations, prompting a wave of analyst downgrades. The company also announced delays in the startup of a Brazil production facility and a strategic shift away from commodity sales toward higher-value specialty products.

The NEX's bottom-five annual performers were rounded out by fuel-cell system vendor Quantum Fuel Systems Technologies Worldwide Inc. (US; -73%) and smart-grid technology supplier Silver Spring Networks Inc. (US; -60%).

Effective with trading in 2015, Wilderhill dropped Quantum, biofuel producer Cosan SA Industria e Comercio, gaseous fuel technology vendor Fuel Systems Solutions Inc. and crystalline producer Rubicon Technology Inc. from the index.

Added to the NEX were fuel-cell maker Intelligent Energy Holdings PLC, solar supply chain specialist Sky Solar Holdings Ltd., solar glass producer Xinyi Solar Holdings Ltd., project developer and operator TerraForm Power Inc., utility management systems provider Utilitywise PLC and system installer Vivint Solar Inc.