

### Trip Dispatch from the field: Day 1.

It was Monday the 18<sup>th</sup> of May, 2015. I had arrived a day early so I headed with two of my peers to Keflavik Airport in Reykjavik, Iceland to meet with the rest of the crew. At 7:15 am we met with Derek and Jonathan who were in a nearby coffee shop, then we saw Mike come out first as he traveled from Denver, and bit by bit the team started to assemble. Once complete, a couple of guidelines were given by the professors as to what were the plans for the day, Orkusyn Geothermal Energy Exhibition was the first and main destination. I separated from the group and went with Derek and Jonathan to pick up the vans, Derek provisionally announced me co-pilot; maybe more like flight attendant.

#### Downtown Reykjavik

We went on a loop and picked up the rest of the team, the first time inside vans, where we were going to spend long and exciting hours on. From the airport to downtown Reykjavik was about 45 minutes, plus another 30 minutes to get to the Geothermal Facility, we were there before our scheduled time, which was 10:00 am. It was a windy day, the lobby offered flavored salts, we were let in



and the presentation, tour, and museum-like facility were astonishing. A lot to learn about Geothermal energy and what a prominent resource it is to all of Iceland. The North American tour guide told us that the facility generated 300 MW of electric energy, which was twice the consumption of Reykjavik, which holds 2/3 of the country's population. Basically one power plant can generate well above all of the countries electricity needs from a renewable and sustainable source such as the Earth's core temperature. We were able to see the steam turbines from a nice glassed covered balcony, and compare the electric consumption of different European cities with a BigMac based comparison chart. This exhibition was one and a half hours long and one of my personal favorites.

Afterwards and at around 11:30 we drove back but decided to take a detour, one of the girls had spotted a parliament nearby, and we had time, so we embarked on that quest. At one moment we had to stop and look at the maps that were on

the curb of a very steep, and barely paved road, apparently the co-pilot was not doing a good job. At that moment, the crew dispersed and some kids wandered off through the mountains, 10 minutes later we were all jumping through what was very squishy and bouncy

#### Wandering off through bouncy mountains



grass. Not to mention that from the side of this mountain the view was unimaginable. After some group pictures, site seeing from porches and much more bouncing, we got back into the vans and headed towards the Thingvellir National Park. We got there and it did not seem very official or legislative, rather it was more like a touristic spot where site seeing was enhanced by an inspiring arched porch that provided a very wide view of a stunning river. A little rocky hill took us down to another stand where the view was also magnificent. The panoramas in Iceland are fascinating, as nothing I, or any of the team, had ever seen before, they are particularly rocky and seem to belong to a different planet.

After the recreational experience it was almost 1:00 pm and time to head back to Reykjavik where the hostel awaited us. It took us some time but we made it there with no significant delays; while Jhonny and Derek checked us in, the group split into two and had lunch between an Italian and a typical/fancier place, both in front of the hostel. By 2:30 pm hostel exploration initiated, we dug our noses through every little corner like small kids, room selection and more importantly bed selection took off, after an hour of relaxation we decided to head towards the Blue Lagoon Geothermal Water Park. Another half an hour ride, in Keflavik's Airport direction got us there. Before arriving there, we stopped and stared at a recently built facility that was allegedly producing Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) from a Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) feedstock. Promising technology to go along with Carbon Capture Technologies, unfortunately we were not able to go inside. Regardless the Blue Lagoon was incredible, it was a huge and very well organized recreational facility. The water was extremely hot and it was exciting to think that we were submerged in the by-product of an electricity generation process, more importantly, a sustainable one. We were there from 4:00 pm until close to 6:00 pm; swam, took pictures, conditioned our faces with some silicon based cream that was offered; a truly touristic but very enriching experience.

Heading back to the Hostel was another half hour, by this time our day felt a little long, specially to those that flew in that morning, but we were young travelers in a distant destination, so as soon as we got back to the hotel, we showered and left towards downtown Reykjavik. There we split into two groups again, I went hunting for fish and chips, found them at a far and heavily americanized restaurant. We had a few beers and ate some nice foods, what a day!. After dinner we wandered off through the city, sat down in the bar of the hostel I had stayed the night before, had another beer, and then finally took the bus home. It was a day to be remembered, and the beginning of what was shaping to be an unforgettable trip.

### **Fish and chips for dinner**

