

Cleveland Energy Forum Focuses on Regional Impact of Clean Energy Development

First of four forums on the future of energy in Ohio held today at Great Lakes Science Center

Cleveland, OH – The first of a series of four regional forums focused on the future of energy in Ohio was held Monday evening in Cleveland at the Great Lakes Science Center. The forum featured panel discussions on the business of clean energy, regional sustainability, and Ohio's future in a new energy economy, for an audience of more than 150.

"The future of energy is at the forefront of the national dialogue," said Jane Harf, spokesperson for the tour. "Northeast Ohio has demonstrated particular commitment to innovation, job creation, energy cost reductions, and sustainability in both the energy industry and in other mainstream sectors such as hospitals, academic institutions and local government."

Harf said the tour is an effort to ensure all Ohioans have an opportunity to help shape the future of energy policy in Ohio. State legislators are currently reviewing the state's clean energy standards and the requirement to develop a plan to comply with USEPA's Clean Power Plan.

The forum was moderated by Tom Chema of The Gateway Group, and feature three panel discussions:

- **The Business of Clean Energy: Creating jobs, reducing costs and driving innovation**
(Panelists: Dennis Bollinger, Energy Developments, Inc.; Al Frasz, Dovetail Solar and Wind; Steve Peplin, Talan Products; Andrew Watterson, Key Bank; and Laura Nicholson, Echogen)
- **Building a Sustainable Region: Energy as the catalyst for a robust and resilient NE Ohio**
(Panelists: Joanne Scudder, Cuyahoga County Agricultural Society; Aparna Bole, University Hospitals; Jenita McGowan, City of Cleveland; and Tom Sherman, Sustainable Energy Services, Inc.)
- **The New Energy Economy: Positioning Ohio to lead**
(Panelists: Alexis Abramson, Case Western Reserve University; Tom Vinson, AWEA; Bob Eckardt, The Cleveland Foundation; Lorry Wagner, LEEDCo; and Mike Shaut, Carbon Vision)

Andrew Watterson with Key Bank said the bank has extensive investments in sustainability. "We have 200 projects in Ohio in renewable energy and energy efficiency," Watterson said. "Investment economics works now. Costs of products are coming down."

Laura Nicholson with Echogen, a waste heat recovery company in Akron, said that renewable energy and energy efficiency have a role to play in helping "turn around the narrative of jobs leaving the region."

"Echogen waste heat recovery systems help industrial manufacturers capture waste heat and use that heat to generate electricity," Nicholson said. "Companies save money on their bills, which can help them expand production, create jobs, and improve competitiveness."

Jenita McGowan with the City of Cleveland said energy sustainability saves the city and its citizens money, helps create and leverage jobs, and creates a healthy environment through energy efficiency and renewable energy.

“The City of Cleveland is leading the way in Better Business Challenge, with 120 businesses already meeting energy goals,” McGowan said.

According to panelist Bob Eckardt with The Cleveland Foundation, northeast Ohio is in a prime position to capitalize on the potential of the clean energy economy. “Cleveland and the surrounding region offers a strong workforce, a robust manufacturing base, and the academics to move Ohio forward in the energy space,” Eckardt said.

On the research and development front, Case Western Reserve University is advancing the future of clean energy technology. Alexis Abramson, Faculty Director and Professor of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, said that the University is building the next great energy projects in energy storage. “It’s essential that we educate our future generations so we are prepared to address the energy challenges of the future,” Abramson said.

The statewide tour is organized by a collaboration of businesses, trade associations, nonprofits and local governments and is intended to spark a dialogue with stakeholders in an effort to help develop a new energy vision for Ohio. The forums provide an opportunity for energy experts, community leaders and the general public to offer their insights in the positive impacts renewable energy, energy efficiency and other technologies are having in their local communities.

Future forums are planned for Columbus, Toledo, and Dayton. The forums will highlight the unique contribution of the various regions of the state to help provide a path forward for developing an energy vision that returns Ohio to a position of national leadership. Upon completion of the tour, a compilation of ideas and recommendations will be submitted to policymakers.

The next forum will be held in Columbus in January 2015. For tour dates and information, visit www.ohioenergyfuturetour.com.

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