



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, February 10, 2015

Contact: Jane Harf

(614) 315-1125 mobile

jaxharf@yahoo.com

Columbus energy forum focuses on economic, health impacts of clean energy

Legislators, clean energy industry representatives, community members among roughly 130 in attendance at second stop on statewide tour

Columbus, OH – A crowd of approximately 130 clean energy stakeholders and interested parties gathered Tuesday evening in Columbus for the second in a series of regional forums focused on the future of energy in Ohio. The forum, held steps from the state Capitol, featured panel discussions on the business of clean energy, strategies for positioning Ohio to be a leader in the clean and renewable energy industry, and improving the quality of life for Ohioans through a Ohio's future in a new energy economy.

“Clean and renewable energy is a timely and relevant topic in Columbus, as legislators debate the future of Ohio’s energy standards,” said Jane Harf, spokesperson for the tour. “Our panelists helped spur a robust, interactive dialogue on a variety of issues including innovations in energy technology, cost reductions, job creation, and Ohio’s past and potential future role as a national leader in clean energy development.”

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 Eric Thumma with Iberdrola Renewables, Inc., and featured three panel discussions:

- **The Business of Clean Energy: Creating jobs, reducing costs and driving innovation**
(Panelists: Dennis Bollinger, Energy Developments, Inc.; Kit Hagen, Nationwide Energy Partners; Mark Schuetz, Replex Plastics; Matt White, IGS Energy)
- **The New Energy Economy: Positioning Ohio to lead**
(Panelists: Ryan Hodum, David Gardiner & Associates; Dan Litchfield, Iberdrola Renewables, Inc.; John Seryak, Go Sustainable Energy, LLC)
- **The Impact of Clean Energy: Improved quality of life for Ohioans**
(Panelists: Chris Allwein, Williams Allwein & Moser, LLC; Rick Hicks, Columbus Public Health; Brandon Kern, Ohio Farm Bureau Federation; Christina O’Keefe, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission)

Mark Schuetz, President of Replex Plastics offered an example of the powerful impact of energy efficiency technology. Replex Plastics is housed in a 100,000 square foot building. In an effort to reduce its own energy consumption costs, the company implemented a number of energy efficiency measures including, among other things, energy efficient lighting, a speed drive air compressor, a waste heat recovery system, and new gas furnaces. Within one year, the company’s heating costs decreased more than 90 percent.

Paving the way to a new energy vision

Ryan Hodum with David Gardiner & Associates noted that the cost of renewable energy continues to get more competitive, evidenced by the fact that large energy users such as GM and Honda are investing heavily in renewable energy.

The Ohio State University has saved \$4 million to date by purchasing wind power, said Dan Litchfield with Iberdrola Renewables, Inc. The University powers 25 percent of its Columbus campus through wind energy.

Quality of life improvements are another benefit of clean energy development. Rick Hicks of Columbus Public Health said that while most view clean energy as an environmental issue, it has direct health benefits, as well. When looking at the sources of electricity, the full life cycle—including total impacts from extraction to transportation, end use, and emissions—should factor into the costs.

Much of the conversation focused on the impact of recent changes in Ohio law that “froze” Ohio’s renewable energy standards. Panelist Dennis Bollinger stated that his company, Energy Developments, Inc., has already invested approximately \$105 million in Ohio and would like to invest more, but decided to halt any further development given the recent and potential future changes to the law.

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 Dayton, Toledo, Southeast Ohio and Cincinnati. 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. For tour dates and information, visit www.ohioenergyfuturetour.com.

Follow the tour online:

Twitter: [@OHEnergyFuture](https://twitter.com/OHEnergyFuture)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ohioenergyfuturetour>.

###