President Obama’s National Blueprint to Advance Energy Security

In a speech last week at Georgetown University, President Obama outlined his Blueprint for a Secure Energy Future, a timely response to recent shocks to energy production due to natural disasters and political turmoil. A cornerstone of the Blueprint underscores the importance of local action and leadership. The implementation of a new Clean Energy Standard, deploying infrastructure to support modern advanced vehicles, and cutting energy use through efficiency measures and demand side management are all places where local governments can lead national action to ensure a strong energy future in America.

In a global economy, energy and commodity markets are fungible. What happens beyond the borders of the United States impacts our economy. When a supply is impacted, depending on how elastic the demand for that commodity is, prices could skyrocket. In his speech, the president focused on the need to drastically reduce the amount of oil imports. Beyond the call for more domestic production of oil and increased fuel efficiency for American cars, the President called for an investment in biofuel and natural gas powered trucks and mass transit vehicles. Both the production of some of these alternative fuels and the deployment of these cleaner burning vehicles can be spearheaded at the local level. Local governments have the opportunity to inspire change across the transportation system in America.

In addition to alternative fuels, the President’s plan reiterates the need to invest in infrastructure that can support electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles. Sonoma County, one of Applied Solutions founding members, is already working to put into place a system for recharging vehicles around the county, and has invested in new electric cars to supplement the county’s fleet. This example of local leadership can be replicated across the nation, and the Applied Solutions network can
help jumpstart similar projects. This kind of investment is what is needed from local governments to help make the greater transition to a different transportation system a viable option for private citizens.

The president has called for 80 percent of America’s energy need to be produced by clean energy sources by 2035. Currently, about 40 percent of America’s energy is produced using clean sources including nuclear, hydroelectric, geothermal and solar power, among others. Local governments that invest in smaller clean power generating facilities can be a huge part of the President’s Clean Energy Standard for America Plan. Places like Johnson County, another Applied Solutions member government, where an anaerobic digester has been installed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and produce power.

The effects of rising energy prices, at the pump and beyond, impact the daily lives of Americans at home. The local governments and communities that represent them, through the President’s Blueprint to Advance US Energy Security, are being presented with an opportunity to lead the nation to a more secure energy future.

For more information, click here.

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**Bureau of Land Management Projects**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced a list of 19 projects for developing renewable energy. The 19 projects given priority status include nine solar, five wind and five geothermal projects. To qualify for a priority project, a company must demonstrate to BLM that the project has progressed far enough to formally start the environment review and public participation process, be cleared for approval by the end of 2011, and the project must be in an area that minimizes impacts to the environment.

For more information visit the Bureau of Land Management's website here.

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**U.S. Economic Development Administration’s i6 Green Challenge**

The U.S. Commerce Department's Economic Development Administration (EDA) and its Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship announced the $12 million i6 Green Challenge. EDA will award up to $1 million to each of six teams around the country with the most innovative ideas to drive technology commercialization and entrepreneurship in support of a green innovation economy, increased U.S. competitiveness and new jobs. An additional $6 million will be awarded by its partner agencies. This year's challenge focuses on promoting Proof of Concept Centers, which are designed to support all aspects of the entrepreneurship process, including business plan development and mentors to offer critical guidance to innovators. Applications must identify how i6 Greenfunding will support the development, creation, or expansion of a green, clean tech-focused Proof of Concept Center.

To be eligible to be considered for an i6 Greenaward, applicants must email a letter of intent to i6@eda.doc.gov no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on May 2, 2011. The deadline to submit the application is May 26, 2011, awards will be given by September 2011.

For more info visit EDA's website here.
Renewable Energy Investment in Oregon Surpasses $5.4B

The Renewable Northwest Project (RNP) has recently reported that more than $5.4 billion has been invested in renewable energy in Oregon. According to RNP, solar manufacturing alone has created nearly 1,600 jobs, while nearly $4.5 billion has been invested in wind energy projects. Additionally, RNP claims over $120 million, with federal cost share programs, has been invested in Oregon's Geothermal development, exploration, in research and project development since 2009.

For more information please see The Renewable Northwest Project's website, and a complete breakdown of the projects is located here.

Pocket Neighborhoods—Compact, Energy Efficient Living

A new trend is emerging in America's real estate market, the cottage industry is quickly becoming a popular option for families looking to save money on energy costs by moving into smaller homes in centralized neighborhoods. These cottages are built in what are called "pocket neighborhoods", compact communities that focus on energy efficient living. Typically, a cottage is around 1,100-1,800 square feet, with features such as high ceilings and skylights to offset the smallness of the space. Pocket neighborhoods and cottages promote smarter not larger growth by building homes that not only save on natural resources by cutting utility bills in half, but by also fostering walking over driving. Currently 40 pocket neighborhoods have been developed across the country, and new projects are springing up in Indiana, New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

For more information see USA Today

Top Ten CleanTech Cities in the US

Reuters recently released a list of the "Top Ten Cleantech Cities" in the United States. Among those on the list are San Jose (CA), Seattle, (WA), and Washington, DC. The number one spot went to Boston, Massachusetts because they are second in clean technology venture capital investments, making the city an environment that is ripe for cleantech startups. San Francisco nabbed the number four spot because the city is working to become the first to be completely run by renewable energy by the year 2020. San Francisco's Sunset Reservoir Solar Project, is the largest municipal solar facility in the state and has received a new $250,000 grant to increase renewable energy capabilities to reach their 2020 goal.

For the complete list of the Top Ten CleanTech Cities see, Reuters

Click here for Applied Solutions membership information