Join Nevada's Newly Formed Networking Group for All Energy Professionals

Nevada Institute for Renewable Energy Commercialization (NIREC)

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Imagine the opportunity to drive an electric vehicle, tour a solar plant, learn more about conventional fuels or discuss the role of minerals in energy—all while meeting other energy industry professionals in Nevada?

The opportunity is now here. Young Professionals in Energy, with support from NIREC, has announced establishment of a new Nevada-wide chapter (YPE Nevada) —along with its first events:

May 14 – Electric Vehicle Caravan to Solar One (Las Vegas; Henderson)

May 24 – Geothermal Operations Tour and Mixer at the Peppermill (Reno)

June 7 – Nevada-Grown Energy Innovation (Las Vegas)

June 19 – Electric Vehicle – Gourmet Food Truck Scavenger Hunt (Reno)
See the YPE Nevada website.

"YPE Nevada is designed to engage Nevada’s mid-career energy professionals through a variety of career-related, community service, professional education and social events to be scheduled across the entire state. “ said YPE Nevada Board Member Walt Borland, the President and CEO of NIREC that is sponsoring the launch of the new chapter. “And, we expect that this enhanced interaction will help to drive more energy-related entrepreneurial activity in Nevada.”

“We are dedicated to forming a statewide organization that brings together the next generation of energy industry professionals,” added Brin Gibson, an Associate with Lionel, Sawyer & Collins. “Members are welcomed from all sectors of the industry and of all ages and experience levels.”

The group has plans to reach out to all of Nevada with activities in rural areas as well, pointed out YPE Nevada Board Member Cheree Boteler, Web Marketing Consultant for NV Energy’s Economic Development Department. “We hope that all of Nevada's energy professionals will decide to join YPE Nevada and help to enrich this important industry.”

YPE is the first and only interdisciplinary networking and volunteer group for people in the global energy industry. YPE Founders Stephen Cravens and Michael Teplitsky, who both work in private equity firms, envisioned YPE as a way to bring industry professionals together to network and exchange ideas in a focused setting. With chapters throughout the U.S. and in London, Hong Kong and Moscow, it’s clear that YPE is filling an important niche for the energy industry.

More information about group activities is available on the YPE Nevada website at www.ypenevada.org.
Renewable Energy Lessons from Colorado—and a Few from California

While California’s renewable energy policies have evolved over decades, Colorado’s mainly have sprung from grassroots interest and laws passed over the past eight years. A discussion of these policies and renewable energy lessons learned was conducted last month part of the Renewable Energy Speaker Series at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Attorney Mark Safty, a Holland & Hart partner and practice group leader for the firm’s Energy and Infrastructure Group, gave the talk. Safty has over 30 years of law experience, and is practice group leader for the firm’s Energy and Infrastructure Group, where 80 percent of the work focuses on renewables (including services for NIREC). Safty also teaches as an adjunct professor at the University of Denver.

Over 50 pieces of legislation have been passed that help set renewable energy policy. Most importantly Constitutional Amendment 37 (2004) mandated a 30 percent Renewable Portfolio Standard by 2020, and the Clean Air jobs Act of 2010 began phasing out aging coal plants, among other things.

At about 7000 MW, Colorado’s energy demand is similar to Nevada’s, but its infrastructure remains even more isolated. So unlike Nevada, there is little export potential. So what has worked in Colorado?

PUBLIC ADVOCACY. Colorado Governor Bill Ritter used renewables and natural gas to help form a winning electoral coalition in 2006. It included Front Range urban progressives willing to pay more in the short-term for electricity, along with Western Slope independents who rely on tourism and Plains conservatives—both areas have extensive natural gas jobs.

FERTILE ENVIRONMENT. Federal agencies like the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration all have headquarters in Colorado. So do influential nonprofits such as Amory Lovins’ Rocky Mountain Institute. Colorado’s universities also have a long history of renewable energy research; for example, the University of Colorado won the first two Solar Decathlons in 2002 and 2005.

FEDERAL ASSISTANCE. As in Nevada, federal incentives such as those in the 2009 Recovery Act (Stimulus) financed huge renewable development in the state.

REINFORCEMENT OF SUCCESS. Despite common perceptions, the “big” energy industry is far from monolithic, Safty explains. In Colorado, oil and gas interests actually supported many renewable initiatives—to help push coal out of the equation sooner. Safty sees enormous potential in this gas-renewable coalition for load balancing and building new energy infrastructure.

NATURAL GAS PRICES. Nationally, gas prices peaked from 2006...
to 2009, making renewables competitive sooner. There is currently a gas glut, but natural gas remains the most volatile of electricity stocks. And, there is great uncertainty about environmental risks from hydraulic fracturing, or fracking.

**CALIFORNIA’S PATH TO RENEWABLES** has been much longer, evolving in fits and starts from the environmental movement, the Enron de-regulation disaster and Silicon Valley’s venture capital culture.

In summary, Safty believes in communication, compromise and consensus:

- Listen to ideas and concerns from local communities.
- Maintain a dialogue with utility companies.
- And look for allies—even in unusual places, like the gas industry—to make things happen.

*Jim Rossi* is currently a graduate student studying renewable energy at UNLV, and has written for the Los Angeles Times, Bike and many other publications.

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**Nevada Small Business Development Center & C4UBE**

**Reno, Nevada**

**June 11, 2012**

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