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UTAH PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION  
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From: Art Brothers Jr.

RECEIVED

November 21, 2008

RE: "DOCKET NO. 08-035-78 – In the Matter of the Consideration of Changes to Rocky Mountain Power’s Schedule No. 135 - Net Metering Service":

Dear Commissioners:

I am concerned about the continued degradation of air quality in Utah. I support Governor Huntsman’s quest to dramatically reduce green-house gas emissions.

Net metering can be the beginning of that process in Utah.

What follows is a news article from the Christian Science Monitor about a small town in Germany that generates 17% more energy than it uses – thanks to net metering and a feed-in rate structure that favors small producers of clean energy.

We *can* do this in Utah. Under the Utah Code §54-15-104 (3)(a)(i), the PSC is empowered to implement a feed-in tariff that will reduce peak demand and foster creation 100% renewable energy.

I urge you to read the news article and pass a similar tariff here. Utah *can* lead the way. But pathway to progress is opened or closed by your actions on net-metering AND providing for feed-in tariff law, which requires electricity-grid operators to buy renewable energy at a premium rate.

The idea is to foster small-scale production of green energy.

Respectfully Submitted

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**In Germany, ruddy-cheeked farmers achieve (green) energy independence**

Freiamt residents produce 17 percent more electricity than they use, boosting their bottom line and proving that green isn't just for geeky idealists.

*By Mariah Blake | Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor/August 21, 2008 edition*

Dawn was just breaking over the Black Forest when Helga Schneider

climbed out of bed, tugged on her overalls and thick brown galoshes, and trudged out to the cow pen. She herded a dozen head into a tiled alcove strewn with straw and manure, and began fixing rubber hoses to swollen udders.

Within minutes, milk was snaking through a maze of tubes to a copper-plated box the size of a cinder block, where the warmth was siphoned off and stored for heating everything from the Schneider's bath water to their home.

Many residents of this farming village have also found creative ways to harvest energy, be it turning manure into biofuel or installing turbines in the local creek. Thanks to their ingenuity, Freiamt is not only energy independent, but produces 17 percent more power than it uses.

It's a feat that defies conventional ideas about energy -- that big companies are key to a secure supply, that renewable sources can only meet a fraction of society's needs, that green energy is the domain of liberals and idealists.

"We're talking about a village of traditional farmers, and yet they're changing ideas about what is possible," says Josef Pesch, CEO of FESA, a firm that develops community renewable-energy projects. "When it comes to renewables, Freiamt is a model for communities far and wide."

Last year, the village generated 14.3 million kilowatt hours of electricity, or 2.1 million more than it used. That's enough to power 600 additional German homes. For locals, who make their living mainly from tourism and agriculture, the turn toward green energy was less about big ideals than finding new income streams that wouldn't harm the soil and forests.

"We're no eco-rebels," says Mayor Hannelore Reinbold-Mench. "We're simply a community making a living off the land and all it has to offer."

The idea first came in the late 1990s, when a group of investors from Hamburg started approaching farmers in Freiamt about leasing land for a wind farm.

Locals weren't keen on outsiders harvesting their natural bounty. But a small group led by Ernst Leimer, who now heads the town's wind energy association, began planting wind-measuring masts at promising sites. They also started holding town hall meetings in the hopes of rallying locals to build the project themselves.

When word of the plan began filtering through the community, some

residents protested, saying the windmills would blemish the landscape and hurt tourism.

But as data from the masts rolled in, people began to grasp the financial potential, and support for the project grew. Eventually, as many as 1,000 of Freiamt's 4,300 residents were showing up for information sessions. When the group began soliciting funds in mid-2001, it took only eight weeks to round up the \$2.3 million down payment on two 400-foot-tall windmills. All of the money came from local investors.

"Lots of people know they can do something for the environment, but they don't," says Mr. Leimer. "Our community took action. We did something for the environment and something for the next generation. At the same time, we did something for ourselves."

The turbines were finally built in fall 2001. The next year, they churned out enough electricity to power about 1,600 German homes. Within two years, investors were getting a 10 percent annual return -- thanks to Germany's feed-in tariff law, which requires electricity-grid operators to buy renewable energy at a premium rate. The idea is to foster small-scale production of green energy.

By 2003, Leimer's group was laying plans for a third wind turbine and eight photovoltaic solar-power generators. But when they started hunting for roof space to lease for solar panels, something curious happened. "People said, 'It's my roof. Why should I lease it to someone else rather than build my own solar-power system?'" recalls Ms. Reinbold-Mench.

Before long, solar panels began cropping up on crumbling barns and old farmhouses all over town. Some residents also started venturing into other technologies.

Today, Freiamt has four windmills, around 250 rooftop solar systems generating heat and electricity, and a handful of biogas digesters, which turn animal dung and other organic waste into fuel. Several residents have also ripped out ancient water wheels and installed modern hydro generators.

The Mellert bakery and gristmill, with its four stories of whirring machines and baking ovens, is powered by a water turbine. So is the rustic saw mill owned by Gottlieb Reinbold, a white-haired former pig farmer in patched overalls. During peak season, the turbine produces enough electricity to power both the mill and his home. It also feeds enough power into the grid to earn him \$880 a month, about half his

total income.

"It's not a lot of money," he says. "But it helps to keep me afloat."

Others villagers harvest energy from a mix of sources. The Schneider family supplements the heat they generate from cow milk with a zero-emission wood-chip boiler they installed between the racks of dusty mason jars in their basement. It's fueled by leftover scraps from wood they harvest in a backyard patch of forest.

The family has also sunk more than \$15,000 into the community windmill project and installed a billboard-size array of photovoltaic solar panels on the roof over the scalloped wood balconies of their farmhouse. The investment has paid off. The panels alone produce about 30,000 kilowatt hours of electricity a year -- 50 percent more energy than the Schneiders use. By feeding this into the grid, they earn roughly \$24,000 annually.

The money helps fill the gap left by low wholesale milk prices and allows them to save for retirement. "We have to look toward the future," says Mrs. Schneider. "My mother spent her whole life working the land, and she can't live off her pension."

The surge of renewable energy has also been a boon to Freiamt's growing tourism industry. Many of the 42,000-plus visitors to the town each year are ecotourists, some from as far away as India and South Korea. Even some residents who initially opposed the project, are now leading hiking tours to the turbines -- just one sign of the changes that have swept the village.

"People used to laugh at us," says Reinbold-Mench "They thought of us as simple country folk. Now they're coming from all over just to see what we're doing, and that's a huge source of pride for little Freiamt."

<http://features.csmonitor.com/environment/2008/08/21/in-germany-ruddy-cheeked-farmers-achieve-green-energy-independence/>