The Renewable Energy Focus Group focused on creating jobs in Indiana County through opportunities related to renewable energy. To achieve the long term goal of creating economic development, the Focus Group proposes a short-term goal of fostering an image of Indiana County as a forward-thinking, enlightened community, ready and motivated toward business opportunities related to renewable energy. This immediate goal includes actions to: 1) dedicate one county position specifically toward this goal, 2) establish a county goal that names a particular year by which the county will achieve a set standard of sustainability, 3) develop a relationship with innovative engineers in area universities, 4) set in motion a plan to produce solar energy at selected sites in Indiana, and 5) use renewables to address heating challenges in older, local buildings. These actions in themselves will not produce significant numbers of jobs, but they will permit the county to market itself as committed to sustainability and renewable energy, and attract industries related to these areas. Based on this, the longer-term goal is to actually pursue economic development opportunities in four areas: 1) a demonstration project of locally produced, locally used energy; 2) manufacture materials related to renewable energy industry; 3) develop data centers, and 4) year-round food production in existing empty commercial sites, using renewable energy.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Wishes/Goals** | **Assets** | **Needs** | **Potential Partners** | **Action Items** |
| **Economic Development** |
| *Short term:*  |
| Foster image of Indiana County as a forward-thinking, enlightened community, interested in moving toward business opportunities through renewable energy | * Indiana County Center for Economic Operations encompasses partnership of local leaders.
* Availability of engineering programs at Carnegie Mellon, Pitt and Penn State
* Opportunities exist to put solar on school building roofs, or other companies with acreage, to produce electricity. Companies or subsidiaries that do renewables will provide the capital for the generation site, hire contractors to do installation, provide the panels, and buy the electricity. Examples exist of arrangements, such as Carlisle, PA.
 | * Point person to generate white paper, research opportunities and actively participate in Pittsburgh based networks with university engineers, & identify potential opportunities
* Someone empowered to negotiate on behalf of the schools for solar installation
* A third party who might be able to use the tax benefits could partner with and act on behalf of the school district
 | * A subsidiary of NRG, or Green Mountain Power
* May also be interested in working with larger local companies, such as banks.
* Carnegie Mellon, Pitt, Penn State
 | * Indiana County will identify one position specifically for researching and targeting opportunities for economic development through renewable energy sector.
* Indiana Co. will establish, articulate and promote a “Goal Year” by which a set standard of sustainability and renewable energy is reached, with a set of sub-goals under that.
* Develop a partnership with innovators in engineering programs at Carnegie Mellon, Pitt, & Penn State
* Generate a white paper outlining a plan to install solar on roofs/acreage, including the steps and contacts.
* Research to identify local companies with acreage, and facilitate partnership between them and companies who will invest in setting up solar panels, then purchase the power.
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| Use renewables to solve heat challenges in older buildings | * Older buildings with heating challenges
* Local expertise in renewable resources
 | * Capital
* Regulatory requirements
 | * Local financial institutions
* Owners of local, older property with heat challenges
* Local expertise in renewable energy
 | * Indiana Co. point person generate an inventory of buildings that would benefit from integrating renewables.
* Inventory possibilities for capital
* Align incentives with increased use of renewables
* Communicate with potential partners and stakeholders
 |
| *Long term* |
| Demonstration project: Generate locally produced, locally used energy through renewable energy production using area’s natural assets integrated with the existing infrastructure’s excess capacity  | * Vacant commercial property
* Convertible energy production infrastructure, line infrastructure; and supply chain
* Geothermal sources
* 50” rainfall annually, significant stores in underground mine chambers
* Geostability
* Availability of skilled workers (including computer technologies, programmers, etc.)
* Access – to Pittsburgh, highways, potential railway access, airport
* Proximity to Pittsburgh
 | * Capital
* Right messaging, i.e.: Building resilience; reducing cost; creating new markets & jobs
 | * Local financial institutions
* Owners of commercial property
* Local expertise in renewable energy
 | * Indiana Co. point person researches the economics and fiscal implications in the renewable energy sector
* Inventory possibilities for capital
* Research regulations, other systems barriers, and potential partnerships for working with them
* Align incentives with increased use of renewables
* Communicate with potential partners and stakeholders
 |
| Manufacture of materials related to renewables: Micro grids, batteries, parts for electric car industry | * Potential partnership with engineers at Carnegie Mellon & Pitt
* Vacant commercial property
* Availability of skilled workers (including computer technologies, programmers, etc.)
* Access – to Pittsburgh, highways, potential railway access, airport
* Proximity to Pittsburgh
 | * Capital
* Policy changes
 | * Innovative engineers at area universities
* Local financial institutions
* Owners of commercial property
* Local entrepreneurs
 | * Indiana Co. point person working through a partnership with innovators in engineering programs identify opportunities
* Indiana Co. point person identify potential sites in Indiana Co.
* Inventory possibilities for capital
* Communicate with potential partners and stakeholders
 |
| Data centers/hot back-up sites, small/medium scale | * Vacant industrial space
* Available electrical generating capacity
* Water for cooling
* Low(er) overall ambient temperatures in the area, compared to west coast and southern locations
* High speed data lines
* Geostability
* Immunity to sea level rise
* Minimization of impact of global warming compared to other locations
 | * Capital
 | * Local financial institutions
* Owners of local, older property with heat challenges
* Local expertise in renewable energy
* Companies interested in developing data centers in Indiana Co.
 | * Indiana Co. point person researches potential opportunities and partners for developing data centers
* Inventory possibilities for capital
* Research regulations, other systems barriers, and potential partnerships for working with them
* Communicate with potential partners and stakeholders
 |
| Year-round food production in vacant industrial space, using hydroponics, controlled lighting, etc., powered through renewable energy | * Vacant industrial space
* Available electrical generating capacity
* Water for cooling
 | * Capital
 | * Local financial institutions
* Owners of commercial property
* Local expertise in renewable energy
 | * Indiana Co. point person researches the economics and fiscal implications and identifies potential partners
* Inventory possibilities for capital
* Research regulations, other systems barriers, and potential partnerships for working with them
* Align incentives with increased use of renewables
* Communicate with potential partners and stakeholders
 |
| **Education: Public** |
| On reducing carbon footprint |  |  |  |  |
| Create demonstration projects that provide opportunities to educate |  |  |  |  |
| Produce guidebook on renewable energy |  |  |  |  |
| Produce *Facts about Energy Conservation* |  |  |  |  |
| **Job Training/Workforce Development** |
| Training centered on technical trades related to solar and other renewable energies | * ICTC, ARIN unit, IUP, Community colleges
 | * Knowledge about necessary or useful credentials
 |  |  |

Resources:

Solar Holler, Huntington, WV<http://www.solarholler.com>,

U.S. Energy Information Administration, current PA statistics and analysis <https://www.eia.gov/state/?sid=PA>

Numerous examples of shared office locations – supporting small/start-up businesses. <https://www.marsdd.com>