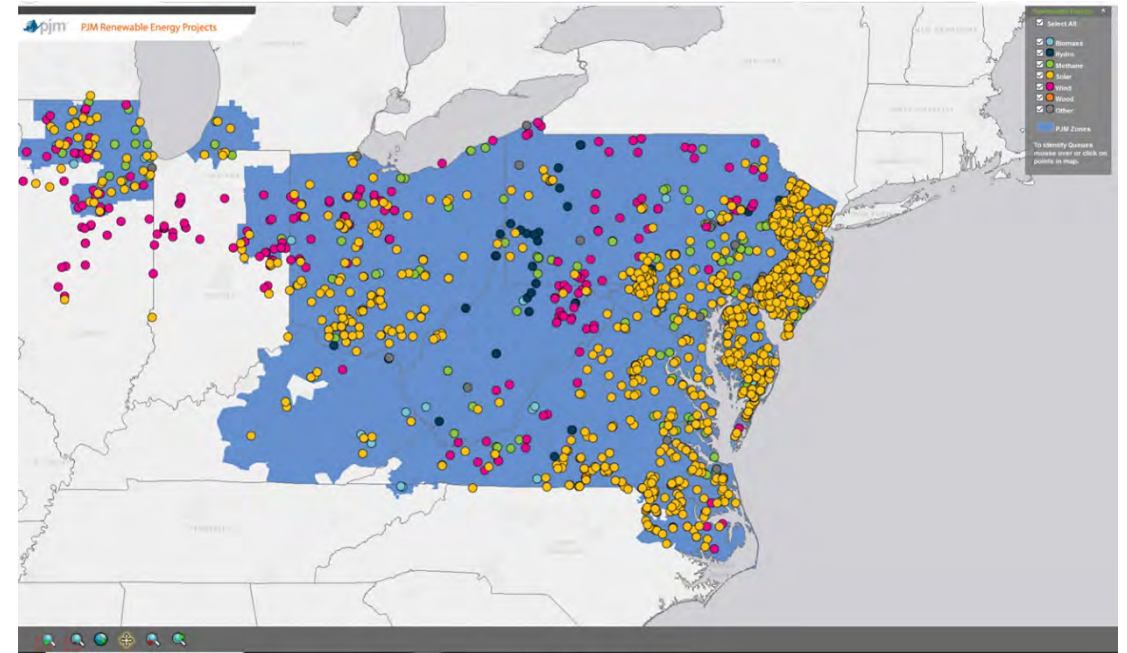


Renewable Energy Focus Group



Vision Statement

- This Focus Group intends to...

... “Foster an image of Indiana County as a forward-thinking, enlightened community, interested in moving toward business opportunities through renewable energy that utilizes local natural assets and the existing infrastructure’s excess capacity.”

Mission

- The Renewable Energy Focus Group is focused on creating jobs in Indiana County through opportunities related to renewable energy.

Goals for Renewable Energy in Indiana

- Co-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 demonstration project utilizing renewable energy.
- Pursue a demonstration project that utilizes microgrid technologies which incorporate renewable energy and improve the community’s resilience.
- Pursue the hydro-electric potential that local water reservoirs provide to Indiana County.
- Initiate educational and workforce development programs that create opportunities to educate the public on the benefits that reducing our carbon footprint and improving energy conservation provide to society.

Assets

- Opportunities exist to incorporate solar energy systems into local public schools or other companies with acreage in order to produce electricity.
- Convertible energy production infrastructure, electricity transmission line infrastructure and supply chain availability.
- Proximity to Pittsburgh and reliable transportation networks.
- Abundant geothermal energy sources, abandoned mine related geothermal resources that number more than 290 brownfield sites.
- 50” of rainfall annually that provide advantages for hydroelectric generation and cooling needs for modern industry.
- Vacant commercial properties and brownfields that could be repurposed for renewable energy development.
- Availability of skilled workers and engineering programs at Carnegie Mellon, Pitt, Penn State, IUP, and ICTC.

Renewable Energy Action Items

- Generate a white paper outlining a plan for this opportunity, including the requisite steps and potential contacts or partnerships that advance the renewable energy sector within Indiana County.
- Indiana County would benefit from having one position identified specifically for researching and targeting opportunities for economic development through the renewable energy sector.
- Research what companies have acreage, partner them with companies who will invest in setting up renewable energy systems and then purchase the dividends or power produced from those systems.
- Create a renewable energy funding mechanism that will incentivize the adoption of renewable energy as a backup or main source of electricity for corporate or private entities that are interested in doing business within Indiana County.
- Facilitate renewable energy adoption within the local school districts or other community organizations.

Conclusion

- The Renewable Energy Focus Group has helped define a more sustainable vision for the future, set renewable energy goals, identified community assets, and developed a set of action items that Indiana County can use in order to encourage renewable energy development.
- Educational programs that create demonstration projects, produce a renewable energy guidebook, discuss the benefits of reducing our carbon footprint and energy conservation are vital components of workforce development within the technical trades related to renewable energies.
- There needs to be a point person within the county that can facilitate economic development through renewable energy adoption. This position will requires an official capacity to negotiate on behalf of local schools and governments within a policy or planning context.
- Building more renewable energy capacity within Indiana County will help current residents leave a more sustainable legacy for future generations.