



2013 ANNUAL REPORT
NOVEMBER 2013

<http://www.renewabletaos.org>

Local Energy and a Strong Economy

100% Clean Energy for our Community by 2020

To Supporters of Renewable Taos and Clean Energy

Below is a report from the Board of Renewable Taos on our accomplishments in the year since our formation in November 2012. We're convinced we can do a lot more to help move Taos and North Central NM into a clean energy future.

If you are impressed with our efforts and support clean energy, please give us your assistance. We meet weekly and have numerous initiatives. You can get information about how to join our efforts by contacting the Board Members listed below.

We want to become more effective in the coming year. We will hold a planning meeting in a few weeks to map out our goals and objectives for 2014. Expect to hear more from us in early December.

Monetary support is always appreciated. I've suspect that several of our Board Members have spent over \$1000 each in the last year covering expenses related to our efforts. If we want to intensify our work, we need your assistance.

Our annual membership is \$50. Any and all contributions are very appreciated. On our part, we promise to make every dollar contributed work toward a renewable, economically vibrant, and physically healthy North Central New Mexico.

Thanks for all your support in the past year. Please help us go forward.

On behalf of the Board Members of Renewable Taos,

Bob Bresnahan

Renewable Taos Board of Directors 2013

John Gusdorf	jgusdorf@q.com	575-779-1588
Mary Emery	memery1043@gmail.com	575-770-8382
Jay Levine	JPL@levine.com	575-770-0587
Gaia Mika	Gaia.Mika@colorado.edu	575-751-3064
Bob Bresnahan	bresnahan.bob@gmail.com	575-776-5007

Renewable Taos Accomplishments for 2013

Renewable Taos (RT) came together in November 2012, so we are celebrating our first anniversary. It's time to look back and assess what's been accomplished. Although it may seem that we have made a lot of progress, there is an awfully long way to go before achieving our goal of a 100% renewable Taos. Remember we consciously decided to include all energy consumed in Taos County including electricity, home and business energy and transportation.

1) **Organization.** We formed an organization with a clear statement of purpose, a set of by-laws, a financial structure, dues, bank account, and a Board of Directors. We've met weekly for over two years including the work that preceded the actual organization. For the past year attendance has averaged around 9 people weekly. Our weekly meetings are now held in the Taos County Administration Building, Room 216 on Monday at 1:30pm.

2) **Education.** We organized the Renewable Taos Lecture Series on renewable energy, climate change and sustainability. The first lecture on February 18, 2013 had an attendance of a little under 200. The second took place on May 22nd and had an attendance of 80. The third took place Nov. 7 and had a turnout of 150. This lecture featured a discussion with Luis Reyes of Kit Carson Electric Cooperative, Inc. (KCEC). These lectures were co-sponsored by solar energy companies in Taos. A lot of credit for the series is shared with our co-sponsors – Positive Energy, PPC Solar, and SolLuna Solar. One of our most dedicated members, Bill Brown, has spoken at two of the events.

3) **Communication.** We've built the RenewableTaos.org web site with links to current news, educational videos, a calendar, and information about our programs. This web site promises to be a valuable tool as we go forward.

4) **Work with Government and Energy Institutions.** Representatives of RT regularly attend meetings of KCEC and the Town and County of Taos. We have given a formal presentation to the County Commission and the Inter-Governmental Council of the Enchanted Circle. We have also given informal presentations to members of the Taos County Commission, the Taos Town Council, and leaders of the local Business Community. We have also spoken at meetings of the NM Public Regulation Commission (NMPRC) and met several times with Valerie Espinoza, NMPRC Commissioner for North Central NM District 3. We've learned a lot from all these

interactions.

6) **Regional Reach-out.** We have started a reach-out program to Counties, Rural Electric Cooperatives, and other renewable energy groups like Gallup Solar, Conejos County Clean Water Inc. (CO), the NM Green Chamber of Commerce, and Environment New Mexico. John Gusdorf spoke at the statewide NMGCC Third Annual Renewable Energy and Clean Technology Conference in Las Cruces, NM on October 26.

7) **Legislation and Planning.** We developed a Joint Resolution for Renewable Energy for Northern NM. Taos County Commissioners and the Town of Taos passed the Resolution in October 2013. We plan to take the resolution to all the local governments and public entities in North Central NM. This resolution calls for 100% transition to renewable energy and the creation of regional organizations and plans to facilitate the transition.

8) **Community Solar.** We developed a program in support of the first Community Solar Project in NM located at the Taos Charter School. We developed materials and worksheets for prospective purchasers and helped conduct several meetings at the Taos Charter School. The array is 75% subscribed. We continue to promote community solar as a constructive way for Kit Carson members to obtain clean energy. We are promoting State legislation that protects Community Solar under net metering provisions. The legislation may be introduced in the 2015 session of the NM State Legislature.

9) **Federal and State Government.** We have reached out to federal and state officials including Senators Martin Heinrich and Tom Udall and NM State Representative Roberto Gonzales. We opened a dialogue about the 5% limit on local energy generation and a more aggressive strategy for developing renewable energy in NM with our Congressional Delegation and their staff. They have conducted inquiries with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Utilities Service (USDA-RUS) and are talking to us about additional actions.

10) **Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Inc.** We researched the 5% limit on local energy generation imposed on Kit Carson by Tri-State. We gained a sufficient understanding of the problem to develop a strategy to overcome or bypass the limit. The means to bypass the limit include expansion of "behind the meter" solar installations. We have concentrated on promoting solar at large institutions including work on a solar installation at the Taos County complex. We've investigated large businesses that are candidates for solar and will expand our work to homes and low-income housing in the next year. Activity that may contribute to *removing the limit*

include reach-out to other Rural Electric Cooperatives and the counties they serve and work on the Federal and State level with legislative and regulatory officials.

11) **Taos Area Solar Tours.** We've conducted a tour for Commissioners of the NM Public Regulation Commission of Taos County solar installations. The goal is to build support for local generation of clean energy among state regulators. We are also in the process of organizing a trip for Taos Town and County Officials to review progress on clean energy in Santa Fe. Exchanging *best practices* is a constructive strategy to accelerate the clean energy movement in NM.

12) **Self-Education** is very important for the achievement of our goal. We've learned a lot more about renewable energy and its technology. We've received data outlining the detailed consumption of energy for Kit Carson and are analyzing it. We've studied an analysis of energy use in Taos County by Bill Brown, one of our members and a principal at Sage West Consultants. We're learning about electric cars first hand. We've learned a little about utility billing structures, a very important issue in determining the economic impact of renewable energy. We're reading the major journals, visiting the most informative websites, watching internet lectures, attending conferences and webinars, talking to local and state leaders, and generally seeking to pick up all the information about renewables and related subjects that we can.

13) **Future Financing.** RT members have attended a grant writing class at Santa Fe Community College. We've identified grants that might be useful here including Renewable Energy for America (REAP) grants and guaranteed loans for small businesses from the Department of Agriculture.

14) **Relationships.** We have built solid relationships with Kit Carson and Taos County. We hope to strengthen these working relationships and build a more meaningful relationship with the Town of Taos, other municipalities, and the Taos Pueblo.

15) **Partnerships.** We have excellent working relationships with all the local solar vendors. They attend our meetings and provide important input to our projects including things like rough cost estimates for large arrays at the Taos County Building. And, they provide invaluable support for our community outreach efforts.

16) **Legal work.** We have received legal support from the Western Environmental Law Center who filed a brief in support of Kit Carson's protest of Tri-State's last rate increase on behalf of Renewable Taos. This work is on going.

17) **Coordination** with other environmental Groups. We're learning about other Taos

and State organizations and individuals that are having an impact in the energy sphere. We will seek to strengthen our mutual ties in the next year.

18) Regional Development of Transmission Lines. We created a position statement on Tri-State's proposed Valley Corridor Transmission Line Project for presentation to the Kit Carson Board of Directors on July 30, 2013. We oppose the project in favor of local, less costly alternatives to providing renewable energy for North Central NM.

19) Community Review of Major Energy Projects in our Region. We crafted a formal request in May 2013 that Tri-State form a Stakeholder Advisory Council (SAC) prior to any National Environmental Policy Act processes affecting the San Luis Valley Colorado and northern New Mexico with respect to transmission line planning. Our request is for Tri-State to include Renewable Taos and all potentially impacted communities and organizations on the SAC. Tri-State responded positively to this request.

For information, call members of the Renewable Taos Board.

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