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PRC EXPLORES CREATING RENEWABLE ADVISORY BOARD

Clayton, N.M.—The New Mexico Public Regulation Commission will discuss creating a Renewable Energy Advisory Board at their next meeting as a result of a town hall meeting in Clayton, N.M., Monday, July 13. The recommendation was made to Art Grine, the organizer of the meeting, by New Mexico Department of Economic Development Green Economy Manager Brendan Miller.

Daniel Jenka, Energy Concepts, Las Vegas, NM, presented the idea at the meeting after discussing it with Grine.

Art Grine, owner of Art's Barber Shop, organized the town hall meeting with the hope to encourage the rural electric co-op to do fair Net Metering and incentivize clean energy as a way to create jobs and give Clayton's economy a much needed boost. Right now, co-op pays wholesale (2.8 cents/kilowatt-hour) for solar or other renewable systems when they are producing energy. Then they charge 18.5 cents/kwh when the renewable system is not producing energy.

More than 50 people attended the town hall meeting which was a strong turnout for the population of just 2500 people. There was unanimous approval of the Renewable Energy Advisory Board. Attendees included PRC Commissioners Jerome D. Block and David King, PRC Utilities Division Milo Chavez; Clayton county commissioners, Clayton city manager, Clayton city attorney; the President of Farmer's and Stockman Bank; representatives from Southwestern Electric Co-op, the magistrate judge and Gary Anderson from WindSunNM. New Energy Economy interns were also present to support community members such as Grine in the expansion of renewable energy in Union County.

The largest employers in Union County are all going down: the three feed lots have laid off their employees and the pig farm laid off 135 people last month.

"In addition to the big guys, Clayton's Main Street businesses are dying rapidly," says



New Energy Economy Interns, Art Grine and PRC Commissioner Block in Clayton, NM. July 13, 2009.

Grine. “Clayton will be a ghost town soon if we don’t do something about it. Renewable energy is definitely the way to jump start it and keep us going.”

Clayton has incredible resources for solar and wind energy and the potential to create many new jobs and investment in the community with clean technologies as a way to generate locally distributed energy that could keep the community afloat.

“If we continue to push for policies that encourage renewables, communities throughout New Mexico will see the economic and environmental benefits and New Mexico will see vast economic prosperity through clean technology,” says Ryan Shaening Pokrasso, internship director for New Energy Economy. “It is inspiring to have young people such as our interns out in these communities leading the charge.”

Public Regulation Commission Representatives Jerome Block and David King traveled to Clayton to speak with community members at the town hall and found that Union County is ready and excited for renewable energy to hit their area.

“I’m very happy with how well the meeting went,” adds Grine. “For too long, our rural community has had no voice with decision-makers in Santa Fe. I feel like Monday’s town hall was a great step in the right direction. It is vital that the PRC begin supporting privately owned, consumer-driven, small-scale, geographically distributed renewables that can deliver a green-energy future faster and cheaper than big power projects.”

New Energy Economy is dedicated to creating green jobs, boosting the economy and solving global warming.

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