

Powering Up America

The Revolution Began Yesterday

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

By Cater Communications for the Emily Hall Tremain Foundation

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There's a revolution underway. It's not on the news and politicians aren't talking about it. In fact, the mainstream media has probably given you the exact opposite impression. But right now, and all over America, a new economy is emerging – one built on a foundation of cleaner fuels and increased energy productivity.

Our opportunity: **Powering Up**. This report defines a new, multi-faceted energy transformation taking place throughout America. The phrase, Powering Up, encompasses the way Americans, in ever larger numbers, are:

- Making energy more **productive** – for any purpose, at any level --- by consuming less energy per service or product.
- Asserting more **control** over energy by owning the means to generate it ourselves, opting for on-site, private, cleaner and more reliable energy sources.
- Demanding **newer, high tech, cleaner, domestic** energy sources that protect our economy from volatile world markets, spare our air, water, and health, and decrease America's dependence on hostile suppliers.

Americans are discovering a new relationship with energy as we come to own our own generating systems. And the more we understand our energy use, the more control we want.

With sponsorship and guidance from the Emily Hall Tremain Foundation, Cater Communications, a bipartisan firm, spent four months reporting on energy developments throughout the country. We interviewed mayors and mothers, engineers and policymakers, students, teachers, and military leaders, with special attention to three states with sharply diverse political and energy profiles: South Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut.

In these three states and throughout the country, we found one common causal thread in America's shifting energy habits: the economy. In the wake of the Great Recession, businesses, schools, policy-makers, families, and everyone in between have been looking for new ways to save money on energy costs. We are, in short, getting smart about our energy money. And, as a result, we American consumers are spending less on energy, and putting more of that money back into local economies.

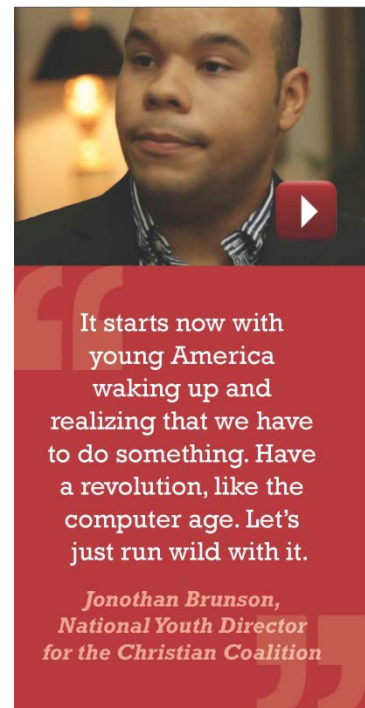
Our key findings, elaborated in the full report, are that:

- Beyond the Beltway, a quiet but pervasive and powerful transformation has been taking place in U.S. energy productivity – the amount of output per energy consumed – and the adoption of new, cleaner, and often privately owned energy sources.
- Contrary to the stereotypes perpetuated by opinion media, this movement enjoys bipartisan support. In many cases, conservatives are leading the way.

- Despite partisan and often paralyzing debates on energy inside the Beltway, state and local governments have moved forward to champion energy efficiency and renewable power, with a wave of new businesses, policies and practices driven by public demand at the grass roots.
- The combination of energy efficiency and what has been a rapid growth of on-site generation of renewable energy is delivering greater economic security and independence from volatile fuel prices and an increasingly unreliable national grid.

There are many drivers of this change. Our research identifies three that are helping Americans reduce waste, save money, and grow their local economies:

- **Technology.** Innovative, high-tech breakthroughs facilitating efficiency and renewable energy sources promise major reductions in dependence on fossil fuels in the near future.
- **Military.** The nation's single largest energy consumer has moved quickly to adopt renewable energy sources, while improving its energy productivity by 13.3 percent over a 2003 baseline. Top military and intelligence experts, including a group of the nation's highest-ranking retired officers belonging to CNA's Military Advisory Board, identify our nation's oil dependence, climate change, and an outdated electrical grid as threats to our national security.
- **Schools.** All told, the nation's 133,000 K-12 schools annually spend \$7.5 billion on energy. Thousands of schools are pioneering new methods for reducing utility bills and freeing up funding for education.



We Americans have made remarkable gains in energy productivity. Yet we've only begun to take advantage of the opportunities to save and grow. We're still paying more than we should for our electricity, primarily because of how much energy we waste. Research shows we're still losing a shocking 86 percent of the energy we consume. This energy is lost mostly through escaped heat as electricity is generated, transmitted, and distributed, representing a huge drag on our economy.

Experts predict that a determined policy of efficiency investments could lead to the creation of almost two million new jobs, while saving consumers the equivalent of \$2,600 per household per year.

Powering Up America, which includes exclusive interviews with conservative leaders in and outside of Congress, is divided into four parts:

A Quiet Revolution – Spurred by State Leaders looks at the drivers behind the new energy economy. Where national politicians have fallen short, state officials have stepped up and are leading the charge to develop a more efficient and profitable energy economy. Throughout the nation, policy and market forces together are driving the new economy – often with political conservatives at the forefront.

Next, we look at the economy from the ground. *Tales from Three States: Red, Purple and Blue* tells the stories of nine projects and policies in three states: South Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut, which have collectively cut energy use while saving consumers millions of dollars, providing relief during a time of tightened budgets. These stories illuminate the diversity of approaches to and benefits from Powering Up.

Thirdly, our research highlights three American catalysts that are helping to drive our shift to a cleaner, more efficient economy. *Three Agents of Change* examines how and why technology, the military, and schools are sparking innovation and adoption of clean, efficient energy.

Finally, *It's Not All Bad News inside the Beltway* examines some bright spots at the federal level. Here, we look at bipartisan federal progress that is advancing the new energy economy and new ways to increase energy productivity.

Together, these perspectives tell the story of our nation's fast-moving transformation, revealing that - quite often - partisanship has very little to do with it.

I tell my colleagues to not let the hair on the back of your neck bristle, anytime someone mentions green energy. If you can figure out how to make a better, cleaner product, why not pursue it? And if you can make it out of a renewable source, isn't that better than one that can be depleted?

Rep. Cory Gardner, R-Colo.

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