

## **FortZED and Clean Energy**

Recent national recognition has reinforced Fort Collins' position as a leader in clean energy development. FortZED – a proposed zero energy district near downtown – was awarded \$6.3 million in grant funds from the U.S. Department of Energy.

By leveraging that grant with state and local funds, as well as the resources of several local companies, FortZED now has \$11 million to integrate a smart grid electrical system, which will allow residents and businesses to both provide energy to and receive it from the grid. The goal is for FortZED to ultimately produce more energy than it uses.

The Fort Collins program was one of just nine pilot projects across the country to receive USDE grant funding to help increase the efficiency of the country's electricity grid.

This recognition is not only vital to the success of FortZED, but it also allows Fort Collins to stand out nationally as a leader in clean energy initiatives. Developing a smart grid system downtown speaks to Fort Collins' commitment to innovation, economic vitality and environmental stewardship.

The inspiration for FortZED came from the UniverCity Connections sustainable energy task force, and the group is committed to further local development of clean and sustainable energy efforts. Converting the UniverCity area into a zero energy district will create one of the largest such districts in the world.

The national recognition of FortZED is further proof that Fort Collins is squarely on the map for clean energy development. Fort Collins is a part of the Northern Colorado Clean Energy Cluster, a group of regional partners and businesses working to position Northern Colorado as the "go-to" region for smart grid technologies, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and cleaner and more efficient engines.

With more than 60 businesses employing more than 480 employees, Fort Collins is receiving significant attention for our clean energy efforts. The Sierra Club recognized Fort Collins as one of the front-runners in promoting clean and renewable energy technologies, and Colorado State University is internationally-renowned for its pioneering technologies.

Platte River Power Authority and the Fort Collins Utilities are leaders in clean energy policies. Poudre School District has implemented progressive energy techniques at their newer schools; their efforts have been so popular they are hosting a regional conference in July on their strategies and buildings.

Of course, many local companies, such as Woodward Governor, Advanced Energy, Mototron, Envirofit, Spirae and more, are leaders in innovation and implementation of new technologies, and are vital players in bringing Fort Collins and Northern Colorado to the forefront of this industry.

The market for clean and renewable energy is growing exponentially. The rising energy costs and increased environmental concerns are driving demand for new technology. Around the world, countries are attempting to reduce emissions and become energy independent. On the national, state and local levels, new legislation is being enacted setting targets for reduced energy consumption and increased renewable energy use. Governor Ritter's Colorado Climate Action Plan calls for a 20 percent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, and 80 percent by 2050. As a city, we are also evaluating our current climate protection goals, and, through our Climate Wise program, are working with local businesses to help them become more energy-efficient. These aggressive initiatives require innovative technology, and create a demand economy for the research and products that are currently being developed in Fort Collins.

Clean energy, along with the work being done in our other industry clusters, will help revive the Fort Collins and Northern Colorado economies, allowing us to drive the national movement into the technologies and industries of the future.