

Power from the People: How to Organize, Finance, and Launch Local Energy Projects

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The movement to source energy at the local level has boomed in recent years. *Power from the People* is a good guide for entrepreneurs looking to get in on the trend in an environmentally conscious way.

Community energy has multiple facets, and this book covers them in a logical way. Part One discusses the various aspects of energy localization, including sections on “Energy and Our Communities” and “Rethinking Energy.” This section also provides a broad overview of a recent history of energy consumption and market evolution. The conversation runs the gamut from traditional fossil fuels to nuclear power and geothermal energy.

Part Two brings the discussion down to a hyper-local level with “Your Household’s Energy Resilience.” This section expounds on the point that there are several steps to energy efficiency, and the first is energy conservation. The book provides concrete advice for the homeowner seeking to reduce their energy consumption and then offers ways that a homeowner can reduce their dependence on outside power generation. It covers relatively unknown topics such as geexchange and micro-hydro and also includes tips specifically for urban dwellers.

From there, the discussion expands to include the entire community. Part Three addresses the parallels and differences between consumer energy and consumer agriculture. “Community-supported energy is similar to community supported agriculture, except that instead of investing in greater food resilience, local residents invest in greater energy security and a cleaner environment.” The book details important steps to setting up cooperatives, partnerships, and community investment in the project and expands to discussion of specific types of energy.

Part Three also offers specific examples of communities around the country that have successfully relocalized many forms of energy. From the Burlington Cohousing Solor Project in Vermont to liquid biogas initiatives at Quad County Corn Processors in Iowa to geothermal power plants at the Oregon Institute of Technology, *Power from the People* gives real-life examples of the ways that a community can energize itself.

Containing appendices with extensive endnotes, a virtual library of additional resources, and a glossary of common industry terms, this book provides a great starter guide for anyone pursuing a local energy project.

AUBREY BLANCHE (September 6, 2012)

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