



Webinar: Seeds of Opportunity

A conversation with community leaders on the economic development benefits of renewable energy for rural America

10 FEBRUARY 2021






RMI works to accelerate the energy transition

Our mission: Transforming the global energy system to secure a clean, prosperous, zero-carbon future for all

Our global programs:

- Carbon-Free Electricity
- Carbon-Free Buildings
- Carbon-Free Mobility
- Climate-Aligned Industries
- Breakthrough Technologies
- Climate Intelligence
- Urban Transformation
- Strategic Engagement & Analysis Group

Webinar Agenda

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- The background of the slide is a photograph of a wind farm. Several white wind turbines are visible against a blue sky with light clouds. In the lower right foreground, two people wearing hard hats and safety vests are standing on a grassy hill with yellow wildflowers, looking towards the turbines.
- 12:00–12:05 Welcome, introductions
 - 12:05–12:15 *Seeds of Opportunity* report overview
 - 12:15–12:40 Moderated discussion with rural community leaders
 - 12:40–1:00 Q&A with questions from attendees

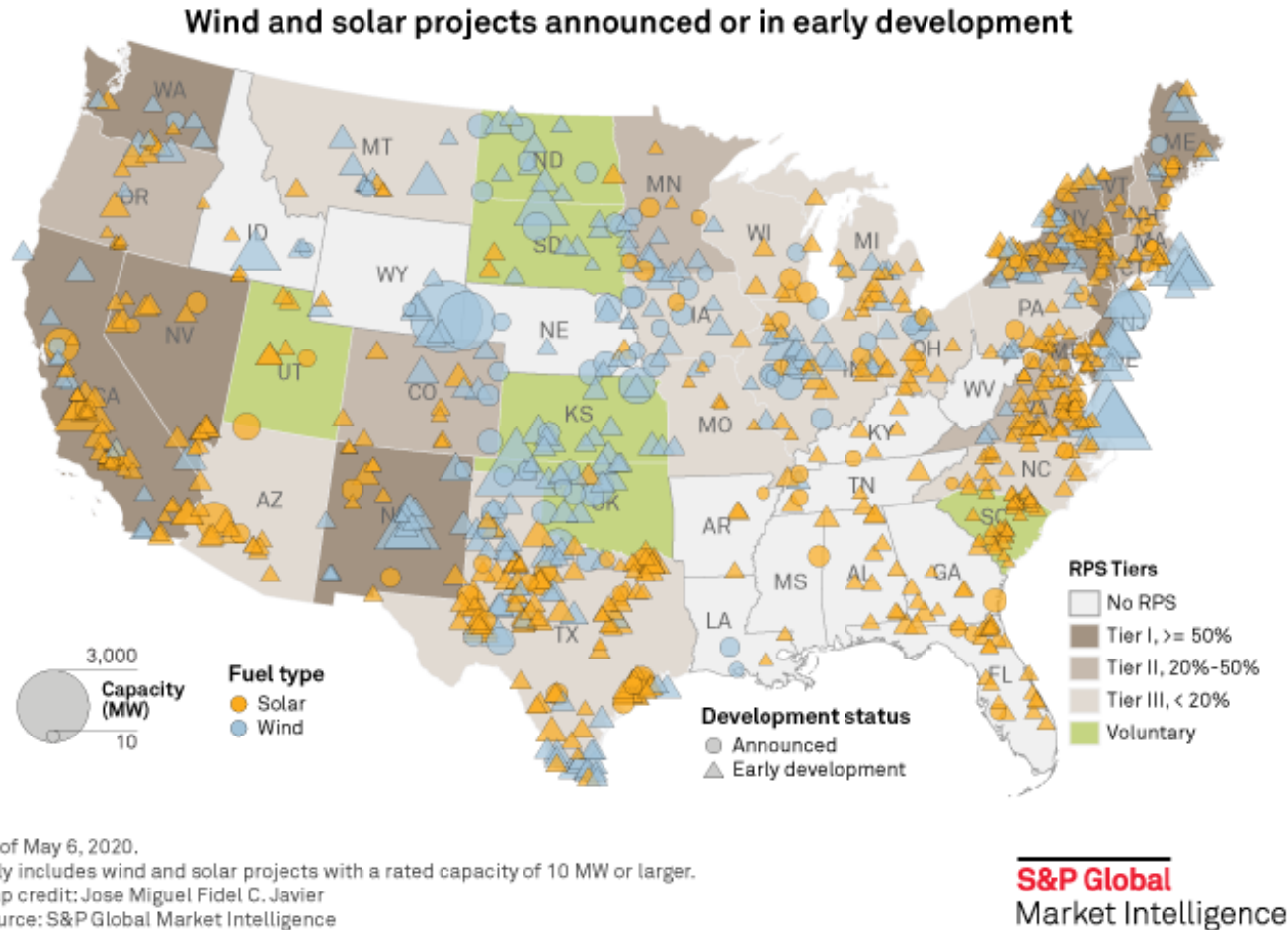
SEEDS OF OPPORTUNITY

How Rural America Is Reaping Economic Development Benefits from the Growth of Renewables

BY KATIE SIEGNER, KEVIN BREHM, MARK DYSON



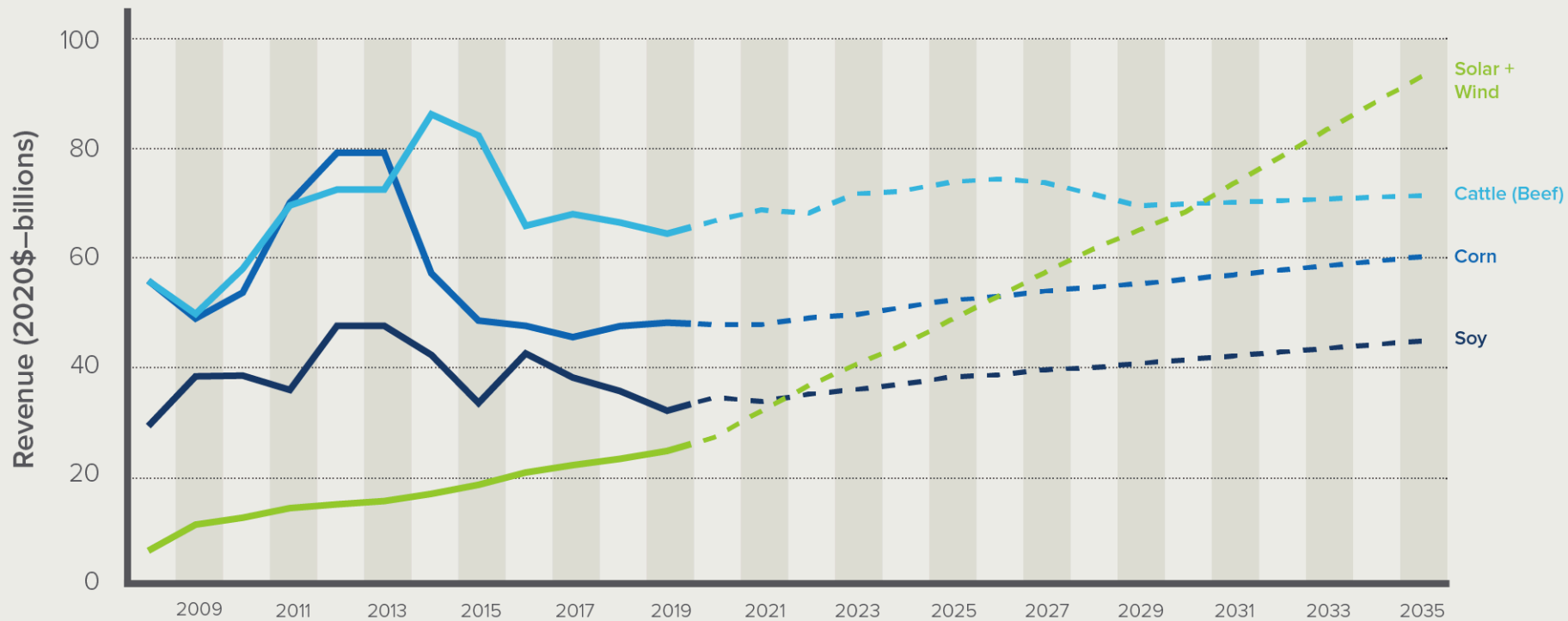
Wind and Solar Projects are Set to Grow 2-7x by 2030



- Based on industry growth projections, wind and solar projects are poised to spread to many more rural communities in the coming years.
- This represents a once-in-a-generation economic opportunity for rural communities.
- How communities engage with these new power generators will determine the extent to which the benefits help build and sustain a thriving rural America.

Wind and Solar are the New Cash Crops

By 2030, revenues from wind and solar development are expected to total \$60B, on par with revenues from the **three leading US agricultural commodities**: corn (\$58B), soy (\$44B), and beef production (\$70B)



New Wind and Solar Development will Generate Billions in Economic Benefits to Rural Communities

These benefits are derived from four core value streams:

- **Tax revenues** collected by local governments: est. \$2.7 billion annually in 2030
- **Land lease payments** to rural landowners: est. \$2.2 billion annually in 2030
- **Construction jobs and wages**: est. \$2.3 billion in annual wages in 2030
- **Operations & maintenance jobs and wages**: est. \$3.7 billion in annual wages in 2030

The ~600 GW of new wind and solar projected to be built between 2020 and 2030 will generate an estimated \$220 billion in lifetime value across rural America.

Onshore Wind Total Direct Benefits (Lifetime)
From Projects Built 2020-2030: **\$108B**



Utility-Scale Solar Total Direct Benefits (Lifetime)
From Projects Built 2020-2030: **\$112B**



Operating Wind, Solar, and Renewables Manufacturing Facilities are Sustaining Local Economies Today



Eastern Colorado



Upton County, Texas



Newton, Iowa

Local Leaders Play a Key Role in Enabling Projects



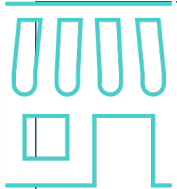
Review land use planning and local ordinances.



Develop a tax policy for renewables.



Communicate with all project stakeholders.



Help local businesses benefit from the construction boom.



Build a local O&M workforce.



Advocate for community development priorities.

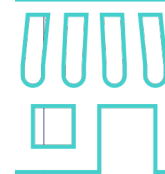
State and Federal Leaders can Help Maximize the Scale of the Opportunity



Define a policy framework to guide local treatment of renewables.



Fund workforce development programs.



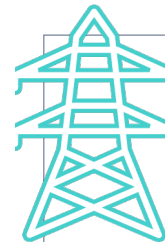
Encourage domestic manufacturing.



Support rural asset ownership opportunities.



Create long-term demand certainty for renewables.



Build the needed transmission and market structures.

Introducing Our Guest Speakers

Troy McCue



**Lincoln County, CO Economic
Development Corporation**

Executive Director

Dusty Kilgore



Upton County, Texas

County Judge

Josh Syhlman



TPI Composites, Inc.

*General Manager –
Newton, Iowa*

Wind Development Grows on Colorado's Eastern Plains

- Eastern Colorado is home to all 4,500 MW of the state's wind generation
- Lincoln County, Colorado has 3 operating wind projects and 1 in development
- 42% of Lincoln County tax revenues now come from the wind industry
- The 600-MW Rush Creek Project is contributing ~\$1 million/year to local schools
- Lincoln County currently counts 45-50 jobs in the wind industry



State's Largest Solar Project Takes Root in Texas Oil Country



- Roadrunner Solar:
 - 497 MW
 - Developed by Enel Green Power
 - Operational as of Sept. 2020
- Enel estimates it will pay >\$115 million to the local area over the project's useful life
- Those revenues will primarily benefit area schools and hospitals
- Construction phase wages totaled \$20 million
- At least \$8 million of that was then recirculated in the local economy

Wind Manufacturing Helps Newton, Iowa Rebound Economically

- TPI Composites and Arcosa Towers helped Newton recover from the loss of its major employer
- The 2 companies employ ~1,250 people in jobs that are the highest-paying in the community right now
- TPI Composites helped the community respond quickly and effectively to the COVID-19 pandemic





Thank you!

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