

Roth: Department of Defense and its drive toward renewable energies continues

By [Jim Roth](#), Director and Chair of the Firm's Clean Energy Practice Group. This column was [originally published in The Journal Record](#) on May 1, 2017.



Jim Roth is a Director and Chair of the firm's Clean Energy Practice.

Department of Defense and its drive toward renewable energies continues

America's largest consumer of electricity is actually the Department of Defense with thousands of facilities and millions of employees.

It's also the largest employer in the world with over 1.3 million active duty servicemen and women, more than 800,000 members of the National Guard and reservists and more than 750,000 civilians supporting their vital missions here and abroad. And more often than not, their preferred choice of energy is coming from renewable resources.

Now this isn't something driven by a political or environmental agenda or even a president, it is much more important than that; it's about enhancing national security pure and simple.

While it's also been a big economic savings to the military, their statements on the subject remain firmly focused on mission readiness and security. And to that end, newly created teams within the Air Force and other branches are even going after contracts for on-site distributed generation and smart micro-grids, so the military installation can control its own energy destiny in the event a cyberattack takes down the nation's electric grid.

In addition, this past week saw a new milestone in DOD's ongoing march toward its reliance upon clean energy, as a first-of-its-kind hybrid complex of wind and solar began commercial operations at U.S. Garrison Fort Hood in Killeen, Texas. This, the nation's largest single renewable energy project, began officially generating its renewable power on April 27, providing more than 50 percent of the annual electric load at this base.

Apex Clean Energy, a Charlottesville, Virginia, clean energy company, which has years of experiencing developing projects in Oklahoma and throughout our region, has partnered with Northleaf Capital Partners to develop, build and own the energy complex comprised of the 50.4 megawatt Cotton Plains Wind facility and the 151.2 megawatt Old Settlers Wind facility, both in Floyd County, Texas, with the Phantom Solar project on-site at Fort Hood.

The idea of marrying these two renewable energy resources is a great one for round-the-clock support to our always-ready military. With solar power often strongest during “the peak” and most expensive parts of the day, and wind power which is available at all times and overnight, the 24/7 nature of our military has a good fit. For us citizen taxpayers, who are footing the bill, we can take solace in knowing we will be made safer and save critical tax dollars all at the same time.

These win-wins should spread across Oklahoma’s many bases, where wind, solar and natural gas are in abundance and where our communities, who support the bases, should also enjoy some local benefits from the large energy investments made within their town and county limits in and around these vital bases.

In the words of the United States Army, “This We’ll Defend.”

Jim Roth, a former Oklahoma corporation commissioner, is an attorney with [Phillips Murrah P.C.](#) in Oklahoma City, where his practice focuses on clean, green energy for Oklahoma.