

Roth: Putting politics aside for renewable energy

By [Jim Roth](#), Director and Chair of the Firm's Clean Energy Practice Group. This column was [originally published in The Journal Record](#) on November 27, 2017.



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Green cities continue to emerge from the coal dust.

Optimistically, some leaders are even proving they will rise above politics with their efforts. After all, clean energy should not (and is not) about politics, anyhow.

Lately renewables are being chosen over other forms of energy for reasons of “dollars and sense.” I recently happened upon a

piece about a Texas city that will be the first to use 100 percent renewables in *U.S. News*, which led me to that publication's list of the 10 states using the most renewable energy. The top 10 are a bit surprising and extremely promising, especially when you consider all the abundant clean energy here in Oklahoma.

In these 10 places, it's not about whether they were likely to have supported Obama's Clean Power Plan or Trump's plan to eradicate it; these leaders have run the numbers and are implementing renewables accordingly, because it's in their citizens' economic interests.

That Texas city, the city of Georgetown, despite being extremely conservative, is one of the first cities in the country to use 100 percent renewables. The mayor there, Dale Ross, intends for his legacy to be that the environment in his city, and thus the planet, will be better because of Georgetown's efforts.

Renewable energy just makes sense, say Mayor Ross and other city leaders, so politics didn't (and shouldn't) play a role in the decision. When the city was looking for a new energy provider, they discovered that after deregulation of retail energy, renewables were more cost-effective. Additionally, policies former Texas Gov. Rick Perry put in place allowed for the installation of large generation tie lines to bring wind across the state from the windy west side. As a result, Georgetown locked in their rates with wind and solar energy for 20 years.

I love the mayor's quote regarding that decision, "Do you think that the wind is going to stop blowing in Texas, and the sun is going to stop shining in Texas, before or after we run out of fossil fuels?"

Oklahoma has a chance to put politics aside, too. When something is cheaper and cleaner, logic should conquer

politics. Recently, my friend Johnson Bridgwater, who runs the Oklahoma Chapter of the Sierra Club, spoke about Oklahoma's solar energy potential (it is enormous). He pointed to a map of the U.S. that indicated states with excellent "peak sun hours," or those with the best potential for solar energy, and asked, "If this map revealed our oil and gas plays, would we sit on them?" No way. We'd materialize that energy. Which is what I hope our state will do. Our energy potential is before us, if we have the courage to remove politics and act in our citizens' collective interests.

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