

# Roth: Intuitive energy trend?

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A good strategic partnership is even better when it can help the environment and a company's bottom line. Intuit, known best for software programs TurboTax and QuickBooks, has partnered with Just Energy, a Texas retail energy company, on an exciting and unique renewable energy affinity program, unveiled just before Earth Day.

Under the partnership, Intuit plans to share its corporate wind power procurement in Texas with commercial and residential customers, providing renewable energy at discounted prices. This innovative program was created with assistance from Renewable Power Direct, a national green

energy marketer.

Intuit's affinity program, Purely Green, features three-year contracts for residential service offered in the Dallas-Fort Worth area at 9.3 cents per kilowatt-hour, a rate that appears to be lower than much of the brown power offers in the market at this time. This partnership leverages the environmental benefits but also offers the collective buying power to make green energy more affordable for all.

Google, Target, Wal-Mart, and General Motors are known for buying clean energy. Right here in our state, the Google data center buys its power from Oklahoma wind farms and the Grand River Dam Authority's hydropower. While some of these corporations have internal commitments to reduce environmental impacts, for others, it's just good business. Some companies simply buy the clean power for its lower cost. As GM's global manager of renewable energy said last year, "it's been primarily all driven off economics."

The lower energy bills Intuit and other trailblazing companies enjoy can be attributed to several causes. Renewable technology hard costs continue to plummet, federal and state incentives have contributed to overall savings, and power purchase agreements provide the ability to negotiate terms deemed fair by those contracting, as well as offer a stable, reliable price for the purchaser and the buyer over an extended period of time.

As here, economies of scale allow the Intuit program to be cheaper for many. The company's approach to sharing its power with others may be the first of its kind. Renewable Power Direct CEO Eric Alam expects "other large companies that buy wind and solar energy to begin exploring how best to share and leverage their green energy choices for customers and employees. This could significantly boost future demand for renewable energy and greatly expand the climate benefits of corporate green power programs."

Here's hoping others follow suit to save money and Mother Earth, while also helping to develop our region's clean energy options.

*(Disclosure: Jim Roth currently serves on the board of directors of the American Clean Skies Foundation, an advocacy organization in Washington, D.C., focused on American natural gas and clean energies, which was founded by the late Aubrey McClendon and maintains an interest in Renewable Power Direct.)*

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