

3 Takeaways from "Wake-up with WOW"

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It was an historic day for Wind on the Wires at the "Wake-up with WOW" breakfast on September 11 as two major announcements were made and the leaders of the wind, solar, and energy storage associations appeared together for the first time ever.

Introducing: Clean Grid Alliance

Wind on the Wires announced at its annual gala that it has officially rebranded and is now "Clean Grid Alliance." Clean Grid Alliance's (CGA's) Executive Director Beth Soholt said that the rebranding project was a deep dive into discovering our brand attributes and core work areas. "As our members have evolved into developing solar and energy storage projects in addition to wind, we grew right along with them. However, we felt it was important for our name to reflect our expanded service offerings as well," said Beth. "We felt Clean Grid Alliance captures the work we do and the partnerships that we develop with our members and colleague organization to achieve our purpose of 'delivering Midwest renewable energy.'"

Under this new banner, our purposeful collaborations and pragmatic approach will remain the same, and we will continue to be laser-focused on policy, regulatory, and transmission work in the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) footprint for wind with an expanded focus on solar, and energy storage.

CEOs of America's Wind, Solar, and Energy Storage Associations

Discussed the Bright Future of Clean Energy

For the first time ever, **Abigail Ross Hopper**, president and CEO of the Solar Energy Industries Association; **Kelly Speakes-Backman**, CEO, Energy Storage Association; and **Tom Kiernan**, CEO of the American Wind Energy Association appeared together, sharing the same stage at the same time. During the "What's on the Horizon?" panel discussion, the leaders talked about how solar, wind, storage and more transmission can work together to capture the energy future. The topics of discussion included each organization's top priorities; the replacement Clean Power Plan; and the imposition of tariffs on solar panels, steel, etc.; and how each organization is dealing with these issues. They also discussed demand drivers, what the future looks like after the Production Tax Credit and Investment Tax Credits expire, and barriers to implementing higher levels of renewables (i.e., particularly the need for additional transmission). The panel concluded with thoughts from Kelly, Tom and Abby about why they are optimistic about the future.

Kiernan stressed the importance of working together. **The electric grid of the future will be made up of wind, solar, transmission, and energy storage, and these technologies share many of the same barriers.** When these industries work together, they will win together.

Hopper addressed the issue of solar tariffs, which many thought may hinder the growth of solar energy in the nation. **"Now that we know the rules of the road with tariffs, we're building and growing around it. It's really not a partisan issue at all,"** said Hopper.

In a way, wind, solar, and energy storage represent different generations of clean energy. Wind first began growing in the 1990s and today is the cheapest source of new electricity generation in the Midwest - it's the oldest generation of clean energy. Solar's costs began to fall shortly after wind energy's costs - and with installations growing, it's the middle generation. Energy storage is just starting to enter the electricity grid and promises new ways to make our grid reliable and resilient, and it's the youngest generation. **"Energy storage is like the bacon of the electric grid,"** Speakes-Backman quipped. **"It just makes everything a little bit better."**

We know the future of our grid will be clean -- and we're paving the way for wind, solar and energy storage to grow as quickly and pragmatically as possible.

Minnesota Energy Storage Alliance (MESA) is Now a Program of CGA

In other news, Ellen Anderson, executive director of the Energy Transition Lab at the University of Minnesota, made the announcement at our "Wake-up with WOW" breakfast that the Minnesota Energy Storage Alliance (MESA) will become a program of CGA. MESA is the voice for energy storage development in Minnesota, and "it was time to take MESA to a more permanent and appropriate home outside of the University," according to Anderson. "The future of the electric grid will have many new technologies - and having an engaged membership of stakeholders that make up CGA will allow energy storage to grow in the most pragmatic, efficient, and functional way possible." By bringing together our diverse membership of clean energy developers, environmental organizations, public interest groups, clean energy advocates, and farm groups to tackle complex issues, energy storage's future is bright at the Clean Grid Alliance.

CGA is in the process of hiring a staff person to lead the MESA program, work with other CGA program staff on state policy and regulatory issues, and on MISO's technical, market and operational issues.