

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI'S CLEAN INITIATIVES AND THE CLEAN TECH BUST

Clean technology was forecasted to revolutionize the way we live. Proponents of sustainable development long predicted the end of our ongoing addiction to fossil fuel. Recently however, the clean tech bubble has burst and effects of that can be seen at the local level. The shale boom, heightened competition among global manufacturers, mainly China, and less-than-conducive national energy policy has led to a lack-luster uptake of clean mechanisms throughout the nation.



The United States Department of Energy (US DOE) envisioned a decentralized, national Clean Cities program in order to further American economic and environmental stability and ensure energy security by collaborating with local actors and reducing petroleum consumption. This coalition brings together diverse stakeholders in the public and private sectors to assess the implementation and usage of alternative and renewable fuels, fuel economy improvements, and emerging technologies, primarily in the transportation sector. The DOE incentivizes, via government-industry partnerships, will add up to around a hundred coalitions working with around 6,000 local programs. But the diminishing trend of the clean tech promise threatened the infrastructure that the program envisioned. Despite these developments over the years, Kansas City, Missouri and its peripheries have deeply invested in clean transportation initiatives under the auspices of the Clean Cities program. The City of Kansas City has devised many outward implementations of renewable energy based transportation around the city's busiest routes. The county has also switched to more sustainable methods of using resources, besides Green Building Permits and Green Transit Incentives. Other actors, such as the Metropolitan Energy Group, an environmental non-profit, administer relevant grants under the Clean Cities initiative in the transportation sector.

As a result of the ongoing endeavors, in 2010, Kansas City created almost 4,000 jobs with a 0.4% clean tech share, which led to it being ranked at #6 on the Top 10 list of “CleanTech Metro areas” by the Brookings Institute.



However, even at the national level, the clean cities initiatives are not immune from criticism – most of the funding for these initiatives is geared towards carbon-based liquid fuels and non-plug in hybrids, although there are few provisions for electrification and charging stations. Another issue was the lag between policy and technology as the programs’ focus seem to be moving back and forth between fuel sources; Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and propane in early 2000s, biofuels such as ethanol and biodiesel in mid 2000s, to electric vehicles in the last few years of the first decade of the new millennium.

Source: <http://www.globalsiteplans.com/environmental-design/kansas-city-missouri-clean-initiatives-and-the-clean-tech-bust/>