Ohio’s Advanced Energy Fund currently receives $5 million per year—through a rider on the electric bills of customers of Ohio’s investor-owned electricity distribution utilities—to fund renewable energy and energy efficiency projects and programs. This rider is set to expire on December 31, 2010.

The Advanced Energy Fund is an economic driver, growing Ohio’s economy by connecting companies and communities to financial and technical resources to deploy advanced energy technologies and energy efficiency.

“CESA provides great insight from a national perspective on the opportunities and challenges of the advanced energy industry and a valuable connection to our peers in other states who administer public benefit funds that support renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. As Ohio develops and implements nearly $500 million in energy programs through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, we highly value CESA as an important resource for best practices and advice.”

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Retrofitting manufacturing facilities for energy efficiency and installing photovoltaic panels and wind turbines to generate electricity at homes, farms, and businesses throughout Ohio are examples of the forward-looking projects that the Advanced Energy Fund has made possible.

The Ohio Department of Development’s Energy Resources Division administers the Advanced Energy Fund and ensures it is integrated with, complements, and leverages the federally funded State Energy Program, also administered by the Ohio Energy Resources Division. As of late 2009, the Ohio Energy Office was elevated to division status and aligns advanced energy as a top priority for the Ohio Department of Development and Governor Strickland.

As of March 30, 2010, the Advanced Energy Funds supports the following programs:

- Distributed Energy Resources Projects (NOFA 07-01)
- Renewable Energy Program Notice of Funding Available (NOFA 08-09)
- Residential Wind Energy Incentive (NOFA 09-02)
- Solar Thermal Energy Incentive for Residential Housing Units (NOFA 09-03)
- Residential Solar Photovoltaic Energy Incentive (NOFA 09-04)
- Energy Efficiency Program for Manufacturers (NOFA 10-03)

Since its inception in 1999 through March 2010, the AEF has invested more than $49.4 million in nearly 600 advanced energy projects. These projects account for more than 410,000 MEGAWATT-HOURS OF ELECTRICITY GENERATED ANNUALLY, EQUIVALENT TO POWERING 36,500 OHIO HOMES, as well as an energy savings of nearly 1,118 trillion British thermal units (BTUs) of heat, equivalent to heating of 15,971 homes in Ohio during the winter. These projects also reduced carbon dioxide emissions by more than 328,000 metric tons, which is equivalent of taking 56,949 cars off of the road for a year. (http://www.development.ohio.gov/Energy/Incentives/AdvancedEnergyFundGrants.htm)

The Advanced Energy Fund supports WIRE-NET’S GREAT LAKES WIND NETWORK to create and implement a comprehensive plan to identify, expand, and promote Ohio’s wind energy supply chain. The Great Lakes Wind Network is also partnering with regional Edison Centers and Universities to offer technical and operational expertise, detailed analysis of wind turbine component parts, advice on how to work with wind Original Equipment Manufacturers, and supply chain and technology support. This project includes a web-based database of Ohio wind supply chain companies. To date, the Great Lakes Wind Network is working with more than 600 active and emerging Ohio companies (http://wind.ohio.gov).

The Ohio Energy Resources Division issued two Advanced Energy Fund grants through its OHIO WIND PRODUCTION AND MANUFACTURING INCENTIVE PROGRAM for a total of $5 million: (1) The Buckeye Wind Project developed by EverPower Renewables in Champaign and Logan Counties, and (2) the JW Great Lakes Wind Farm in Hardin County. This program was the first to support Ohio utility-scale wind projects through a production incentive. As a result of this program, these two projects have now become the first two projects to submit applications to the Ohio Power Siting Board, which has jurisdiction for the installation of utility-scale wind farms at 5 MW and above in Ohio.

The Advanced Energy Fund continues to provide financial support to SMALL WIND AND RESIDENTIAL SOLAR PROJECTS projects for Ohio residents across the state. For example, with the assistance of a $19,980 Advanced Energy Fund grant, William Little of Deerfield, Ohio, installed a 5 kW wind turbine mounted on a 100-foot tower and a 2 kW solar array. This project cost approximately $80,000 and enables the Little Family to reduce utility bills by 90% (http://www.development.ohio.gov/Energy/Incentives/AdvancedEnergyFundGrants.htm).

The Toledo Museum of Art received a grant to complete the first phase of a 200 kW photovoltaic system in the spring. This first phase included 1,450 First Solar modules, totaling 101 kW, installed on the roof over the Peristyle and a portion of the Museum’s East Wing, which provides as much as 20% of the Museum’s electrical demand during the hours that the Museum is open to the public when the demand is greatest.