

## Inspiring Case Study of One Small Town's Clean Energy Independence – Wildpoldsried, Germany

Complete story: <http://www.jgpress.com/archives/free/002409.html#more>

Wildpoldsried, population ~2600, produces 321 percent more energy than it needs and generates \$5.7 million in annual revenue, a remarkable accomplishment for a modest farming community that turned a village with no industry into an industrial powerhouse of renewable energy.



How did they do it? With the help of good state policy, good planning and eager local entrepreneurs and pioneers.

Planning included keeping initiatives local, building new industry, bringing in new revenues and creating no debt. Principles included renewable energy and energy efficiency, ecological construction of buildings using green building materials, and protection of water resources and ecological disposal of wastewater.

The results included solar panels on rooftops of most of the municipal buildings, five biogas digesters, nine wind turbines, 190 private households equipped with solar, a district heating network with 42 connections, three small hydro power plants, ecological flood control and a natural wastewater system. Small businesses have sprung up to sell and install technologies and provide services to the renewable energy installations — from solar panels to district heating to the anaerobic digesters and energy efficiency retrofits.

\*\*\*\*\*

Germany is renowned for its groundbreaking Renewable Energy Source Act of 2000. This legislation created what is known as a “feed-in tariff” that requires utilities to pay producers of renewable energy a set price for a set period of time. Entrepreneurs, citizens and small businesses thus had ample incentive to invest in renewable energy. This policy is one of the key reasons that the Wildpoldsried phenomenon happened.

Wildpoldsried serves as a model for communities interested in developing local clean energy sources. Sonoma County is laying the groundwork for such energy with its “renewable energy secure communities” (RESCO) project funded by the California Energy Commission. RESCO will provide an in-depth analysis of local energy sources and how to harness them. Additionally the Sonoma County Water Agency is studying “community choice aggregation,” a means of exercising local decisions about procurement of the community’s electricity. If Sonoma County decides to create Community Choice, we can realize community values such as local economic investment, green job creation, greenhouse gas reductions, energy security and independence, and grid resilience.

For more information: [www.climateprotection.org](http://www.climateprotection.org)