

PETER MEISEN

Plugging the world into a natural grid

Peter Meisen's life changed when he read page 206 of the book *Critical Path* by R. Buckminster Fuller.

Fuller, who is most famous for inventing the geodesic dome, wrote *Critical Path* and many other books in his lifelong pursuit to answer the question, "Does humanity have a chance to survive lastingly and successfully on planet Earth, and if so, how?" He believed the way to provide sustainable energy – and a better life – for everyone would be to tap renewable energy resources around the world.

"I was floored," recalls Meisen, an honorary member of the Rotary Club of

Rancho Bernardo Sunrise (San Diego), Calif., USA. "This needed to be investigated further."

After reading *Critical Path*, Meisen spent six months researching the merit of Fuller's ideas. He attended meetings of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers and asked members whether they thought harnessing renewable energy resources was possible. They told him it was technically feasible, but not likely politically.

Undeterred, Meisen, an applied social engineer who was working full time at an organization that aimed to end hunger, started the

Global Energy Network Institute. The San Diego-based research group provides technical, social, and policy data to world policymakers and industry leaders. He hopes data from the institute will help establish a worldwide electrical grid that distributes sustainable energy, such as wind-, solar-, and hydropower. His group also highlights other alternative energy sources, including hot steam from the ground for geothermal energy, crop waste for biomass energy, and underwater currents, tides, and waves for ocean energy and thermal energy conversion.

"This collectively could meet all the earth's electrical needs forever, many times over," Meisen says. "This is a better strategy than the path we're on, which is not sustainable, not moving toward a green earth. We're moving toward pollution."

Meisen has presented the institute's mission at several local Rotary clubs and sets up a booth at most RI conventions. He hopes that Rotary, as a global volunteer organization, and that Rotarians, as business leaders, will rely on his group's data and research

to lead others in accelerating the transition to clean resources.



How you can help

- Peter Meisen suggests the following small actions that collectively make a big impact:
1. Turn off lights and computer monitors when you leave a room.
 2. Install solar panels and water heaters on your rooftop.
 3. Purchase Energy Star models when you need new appliances.
 4. Buy a hybrid automobile the next time you're in the market for a car.
 5. Use E10 or E85 ethanol flexible-fuel, made from corn, if your car allows.
 6. Invest your money in a green-energy fund.
 7. Ask your public officials to support incentives for renewable development.

■ **On the Web**

Learn more about the Global Energy Network Institute at www.geni.org.

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