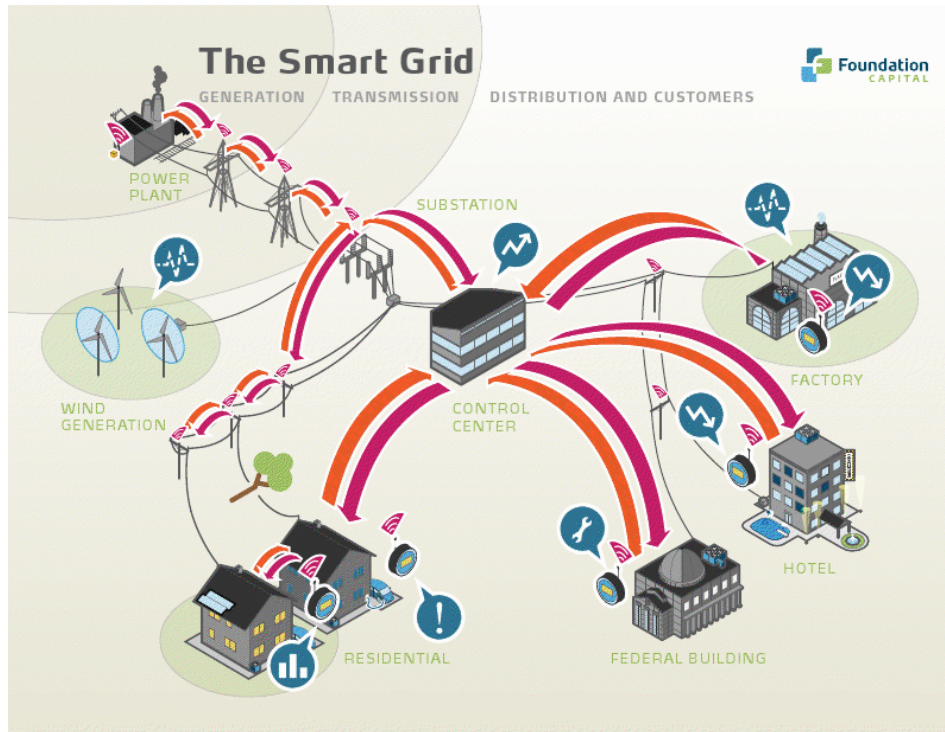


ZDNet.com GreenTech Pastures

February 18th, 2009

## Greentechies smiling a little brighter today

Posted by Harry Fuller @ 3:00 pm



Courtesy: Foundation Capital.

One immediate effects of the Obama Administration's economic plans: it has stimulated optimism among greentech firms and investors.

I spoke yesterday with Steve Vassallo, principal at Foundation Capital. They have a range of greentech investments in their VC portfolio. Steve walked me through the reasons for their bright outlook. \$4.5 billion for modernizing America's electricity grid. Right our grid's the equivalent of a 1950s assembly line. Foundation has three players here. As Steve would say, their firms could wise-up a currently dumb grid. [eMeter](#) license software for process automation, load and delivery measured accurately, end-to-end visibility, and real-time control of the grid.

[EnerNOC](#) goes after overall lyutility efficiency. They rationalize demand response, price response, and demand management for commercial and industrial electricity markets in the United States. That includes more efficient commercial contracting, and best practices for embedded systems technology. Their thrid gird player is Silver Springs. See below.

## NOT FLYING BLIND

[Naverus](#) which saves 10% or more on fuel costs for airlines by providing the most efficient routing and approach planning. Crucial when you consider most airlines spend over half of their budget on fuel. Vassallo is optimistic his line-up of greentech firms will sell their services and products to established vendors, utilities and government agencies. The current business climate calls not just for investment in construction and efficiency, it's increased awareness of new, greener technologies. He pointed to [Serious Materials](#). I blogged about them last year. They make windows that are R-11, not the usual double pane, painful, R-2 windows they sell at the local lumber yard. He sees Serious partnering with some of the larger old-line window firms around the country.

One point of frustration around Serious. They're employing technology developed at MIT over 30 years ago, freely exported to Europe where it was put to work. And ignored here because our system couldn't be bothered with energy conservation. No doubt we taxpayers funded that original research so we're finally gonna get some of our own back. Took long enough.

## PURE GENIUS

Perhaps the most ingenious of the Foundation's firms: [Purfresh](#) Purfresh can produce safe, clean food and water. Its chemical-free, ozone-based products are approved by the FDA, EPA and USDA. Purfresh uses ozone kill deadly, food-borne pathogens such as E. coli and Salmonella, while remaining 100 percent organic. Too bad the bad peanut guys didn't know about Purfresh. After the ozone (O3) does its things on the nasty little beasties, the off-gas is O2, fit for breathing.

From a broad perspective Vassallo sees the \$60+ billion in the federal spending plan to be a big benefit for his companies, their rivals, their partners and the earth's environment. Jobs? Oh yes, one of their firms is already hiring.

That would be [Silver Spring Networks](#). They provide networking systems for all manner of stuff moving along pipes or wires: electricity, gas, water. No matter where it comes from, solar or coal, or where it's going farm or factory, it's best to know how much, where and when. All efficient systems depend on correct, up-to-the-minute data.

In the residential power market Foundation supports [SunRun](#). They're a residential solar electricity provider, offering a low-capital, zero-hassle way to go solar. You get solar power on your home with just a monthly fee, not the hefty front-end costs.

Vassallo was also upbeat about how quickly some of the Smart Grid applications could be deployed. This will not take years, he said. The work could begin as soon as the money is ready. He did point out that the Department of Energy will oversee most of the disbursement of money to states and that the DOE is not yet staffed up. A key post to be filled, said Vassallo, Director of Commercialization at DOE. Vassallo also said he knew of several qualified, keen greentechies who were leaving Silicon Valley to work inside the government to push the new technologies forward. Wow, Vassallo actually sounded like a man who's happy to be doing what he's doing. cleantech investment evaluation for a VC firm.

## SMART GRID MANIFESTO

To see the whole Smart Grid manifesto from Foundation Capital, [click here](#). The basic idea: do for utilities what the PC and laptop did for office work in America. From the manifesto:

"Think about it: the first car, the first airplane, the first television, the first computer, the first factory – they've all been changed and improved in countless ways. They all got faster, cheaper, and better. Not the grid. It was brilliant when it was created, but while everything else got smarter, it stayed the same."