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## Smart grids made focus of upcoming clean energy summit

Austin Business Journal - by [Christopher Calnan](#) ABJ Staff

This year's Clean Energy Venture Summit is narrowing its focus and concentrating on smart grids such as the local Pecan Street Project.

The summit, scheduled for Oct. 14-15 at the University of Texas, is expected to draw 300 to 400 attendees combined with a business plan competition of 30 to 40 early-stage clean energy companies. The event, organized by the **Austin Technology Incubator**, will be the third Clean Energy Venture Summit.

It will be at the **AT&T Executive Center** at the University of Texas.

But unlike last year's broader policy focus, this year's summit is expected to target smart grids and the many types of technology companies that can generate business developing the grids. Going beyond renewable energy, smart grids also incorporate software, semiconductors, wireless and other technologies, ATI spokeswoman Melissa Rabeaux said.

"This is putting the rubber to the road," she said. "There's a lot of opportunity for convergence."

During the summit's second day, Oct. 15, a six-person panel of renewable energy officials are scheduled to discuss smart grids.

Panelists include Cris Eugster, executive vice president and chief sustainability officer for CPS Energy; Mark Rose, general manager and CEO of **Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative**; and Steve Hauser, vice president of grid integration for the **National Renewable Energy Laboratory**.

The business plan competition will feature winners in five cleantech areas as well as an overall winner. The five categories are distributed generation and renewable energy, energy efficiency, transportation and storage, demand management and miscellaneous.

The Pecan Street Project, which is awaiting federal funding after nearly a year of planning, adopted its name from the former name of the city's iconic Sixth Street. Once off the ground the smart-grid initiative will enable Austin to test the integration of alternative forms of energy combined with the software, storage and business models fueling their use.

One goal is to install 320,000 smart meters, which better monitor electricity use and enable consumers to adjust their demand and lower their costs. The Pecan Street Project would also include a system that delivers energy without polluting water and air — producing a power plant’s worth of energy within the city limits via renewable resources, project officials said.

The project’s concept was introduced to city officials last year, and two reports were scheduled to be released at the end of September detailing its planning phase.