

Pulaski County: Enabling Resiliency and Stimulating Job Creation

Developing a Pipeline of Building Energy Improvements in Pulaski County, Arkansas

AT A GLANCE

Investment Priorities

Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) Financing for Energy Efficiency Retrofits, Alternative Energy, Building Resiliency, Water Conservation Systems, and Workforce Training

Pipeline Value

\$1,000,000

Key Partners

Arkansas Advanced Energy Foundation (AAEF); Pulaski County Government; workforce partners including Shorter College, UA Little Rock, Camp Alliance, House About It, EmpowerArk, Pulaski County Youth Services, Our House, ABC Arkansas, and Goodwill Industries of Arkansas.

Community Impacts

100% of projects serving disadvantaged communities; Expanding access to family-sustaining advanced energy careers for local residents; Lowering operational costs for local businesses and nonprofits.

Strategic Role

Project Originator / C-PACE Administrator / Technical Assistance Provider / Workforce Development matchmaker

The Path Forward

Seeking to fully capitalize the C-PACE pipeline and expand the SkillStream workforce program to continually match trained talent with incoming infrastructure projects.

THE BIG PICTURE

Pulaski County and the Arkansas Advanced Energy Foundation (AAEF) are acting as the local engine for building energy efficiency improvements by bridging the gap between ideas and reality through energy financing and workforce readiness. With support from the Municipal Investment Fund (MIF), the county is accelerating two aligned initiatives: expanding the uptake of Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) for building improvements and growing the local talent pool to execute these projects. By addressing both the financial barriers to modernizing buildings and the shortage of skilled labor, these partnerships are creating a robust, financeable portfolio of infrastructure upgrades that stimulate the local economy.

The Challenge: Local businesses and nonprofits often lack the upfront capital needed for essential facility upgrades, while employers simultaneously struggle to find trained tradespeople to complete infrastructure projects.

The Solution: Combining a standardized C-PACE financing mechanism with AAEF's "SkillStream" model, a career pipeline for advanced energy jobs, thus creating a localized ecosystem where funded projects will ultimately translate into high-quality jobs for the community.



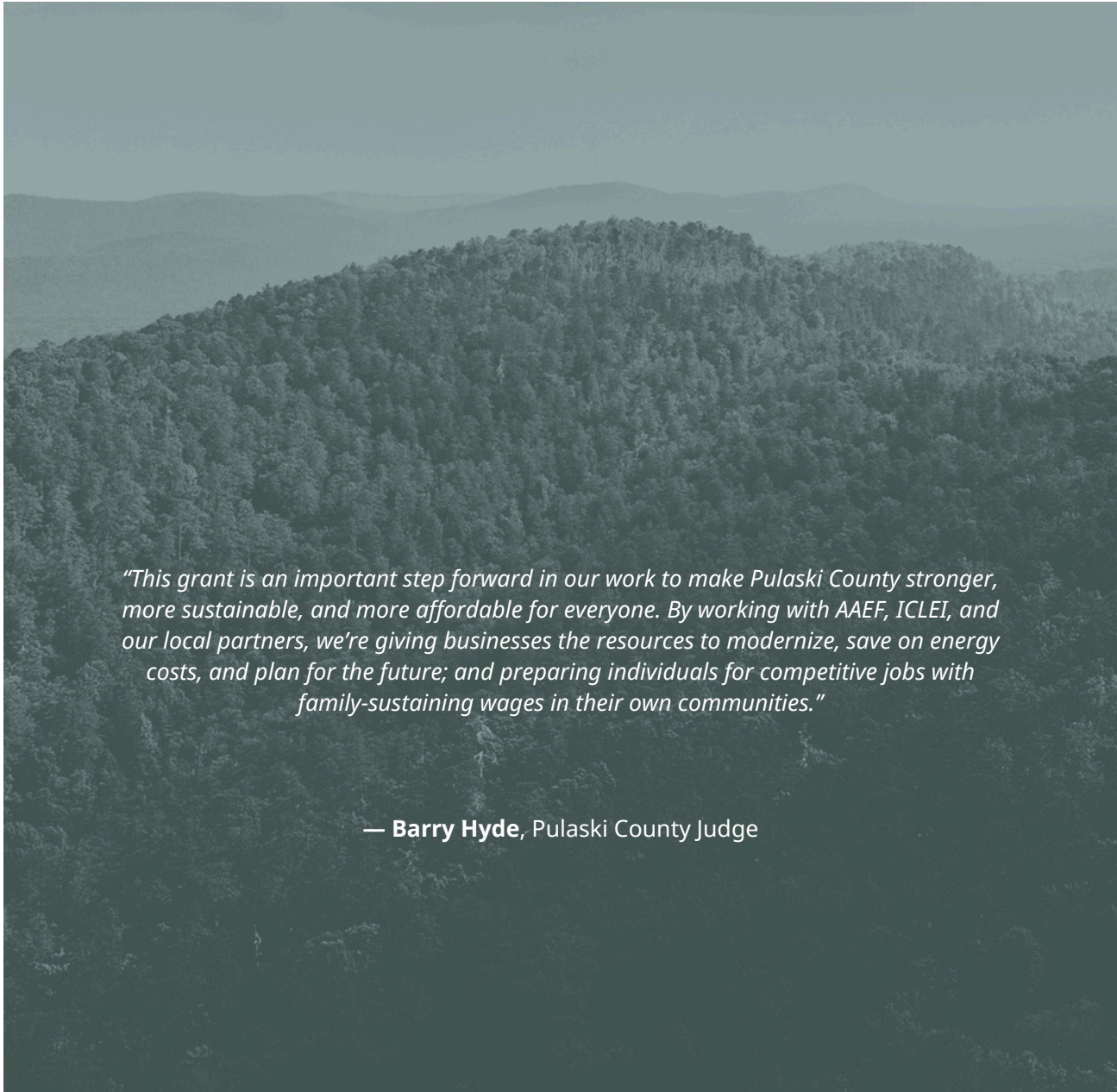
An image of Empower Expo 2025.

CREATING THE FOUNDATION

AAEF and Pulaski County are establishing a durable market for energy efficiency and water conservation upgrades. The county is utilizing C-PACE to unlock long-term, fixed-rate financing that allows commercial, nonprofit, and multifamily residential property owners to pay for infrastructure improvements through property tax assessments. Simultaneously, AAEF is collaborating with local colleges and training institutions, such as ABC Arkansas and Goodwill Industries of Arkansas, to align curricula with the specific technical needs of upcoming C-PACE projects. This systemic solution ensures that as financing becomes available, a trained workforce is already prepared to implement the upgrades, reducing soft costs and project delays.

FEEDING THE PIPELINE

This partnership is actively sourcing building infrastructure projects through targeted community engagement and employer networks. AAEF connects with building owners, project developers, contractors and community-based organizations to identify commercial and multifamily housing facilities that are well-suited for C-PACE financing. By providing technical assistance and guiding property owners through the eligibility process, they are aggregating smaller, localized renovations into a steady, visible pipeline of bankable investments that directly benefit critically impacted communities.



“This grant is an important step forward in our work to make Pulaski County stronger, more sustainable, and more affordable for everyone. By working with AAEF, ICLEI, and our local partners, we’re giving businesses the resources to modernize, save on energy costs, and plan for the future; and preparing individuals for competitive jobs with family-sustaining wages in their own communities.”

— **Barry Hyde**, Pulaski County Judge

IMPACT & NEXT STEPS

The impact of the Pulaski County and AAEF partnership is measured by its dual focus on building infrastructure modernization and economic empowerment. By directing C-PACE financing toward community cornerstones, the initiative ensures that the benefits of sustainable energy are felt in disadvantaged communities. Furthermore, by linking these investments directly to the SkillStream workforce program, the county is creating accessible pathways for residents to secure family-sustaining careers in the advanced energy sector.

Currently, the partnership has identified an initial pipeline of \$1 million in C-PACE-eligible projects. To move this portfolio into the construction phase and expand the program's reach, the initiative aims to finalize financial underwriting for the anchor projects while continuing to recruit and train local tradespeople. Every dollar of predevelopment and programmatic support invested today ensures that Pulaski County's commercial buildings and multifamily housing become future-ready, while simultaneously building a resilient, highly skilled local workforce.

This case study was funded through the Municipal Investment Fund, a partnership between ICLEI USA and CGC to support local governments, Tribes, and their partner not-for-profit organizations develop public-private partnership plans that can accelerate the deployment of capital to sustainable energy projects.