NEWS RELEASES

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Renew Grid: Husch Blackwell's Energy Strategist and WIRES Counsel Jim Hoecker Predicts Lower Energy Prices with Increased Wind Power and Transmission

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A recent Americans For A Clean Energy Grid (ACEG) study concluded that upgrading transmission in the Midwest Independent Transmission System Operator (MISO) territory and increasing wind power investment would create end user benefits at a lower cost than initially assumed. The *Renew Grid article* reporting ACEG's findings asserts that because wind energy involves essentially a zero-cost fuel, the influx of significant amounts of wind power would lead to lower energy prices, even with foundational investments in needed new transmission facilities. The article quotes Husch Blackwell Senior Counsel and Energy Strategist Jim Hoecker, who is counsel for the industry group WIRES. "It is not reasonable to presume that infrastructure investment will always translate into higher rates for consumers," Hoecker said. "To the contrary, every penny sunk into expanding the transmission system is likely to put downward pressure on wholesale and retail prices by making lower-cost resources available to the market. That is a story that needs telling."

Annual overall energy costs appear to decline in direct relation to increased wind energy production, according to ACEG.. And according to Hoecker, the benefit of strengthening the transmission grid doesn't stop with customer access to wind energy. "Of course, beyond the scope of this particular study, there exists a range of other potential benefits to be derived from a more resilient and efficient grid - reduced congestion, support for bulk power market competition, resource diversity, jobs and new technology deployment, heightened reliability, operational flexibility and reduced emissions," he said.