

# Renewing America

## Clean Energy Economy Means New Manufacturing Jobs

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy announced the bold challenge of sending astronauts to the moon within a decade. In 1969, after only eight years of American innovation, Neil Armstrong stepped out of a landing craft onto the moon's surface, taking what he called "a giant step for mankind."

If the country's energies and talents were again focused as they were by President Kennedy, something just as grand could be achieved — new energy-saving technologies that lessen our nation's dangerous

dependence on foreign oil while creating new good-paying manufacturing jobs and improving the quality of our environment.

That's the lofty yet doable goal of a new strategic partnership between the United Steelworkers, the nation's largest manufacturing union, and the Sierra Club, the nation's largest environmental organization.

"It's fabulous. It's something that's way overdue," USW member Mike Russo said after hearing International President Leo W. Gerard and Sierra Club Executive Director Carl Pope tout the program with

Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell in front of Philadelphia's Independence Hall.

Both the USW and the Sierra Club vigorously support the Apollo Alliance, which takes its name from the early space program and aims to spur the economy and create jobs by investing in renewable energy technologies, more efficient buildings, manufacturing techniques and modes of transportation.

The Apollo Alliance was originally launched by the Institute for America's Future (IAF), a pro-labor progressive

advocacy group whose board of directors includes Gerard. The IAF recently voted to scale up Apollo's operations by having former California state treasurer and Democratic gubernatorial candidate Phil Angelides become its chairman.

The Apollo program has been endorsed by members of the Democratic Governors Association in a December meeting with Gerard and Apollo Alliance President Jerome Ringo.

New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson called the plan a "solid road map" to end

our reliance on foreign oil and predicted the issue would be a major focus of the 2008 presidential campaign.

"It is the top issue in the presidential race, the top challenge facing America because it deals with national security," Richardson added. "It is focused on state efforts because states are the incubators of innovation, especially when there's an absence of leadership at the federal level."

The governors' endorsement followed a three-day whirlwind tour dubbed "The Road to Energy Independence — Renewables Now" — that took Gerard and Pope to St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minn.; Columbus and Cleveland, Ohio, and Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, Pa.

In union halls and on public stages over the three days late last year, Gerard and Pope called for an innovative 21st century energy policy that would create a new generation of domestic manufacturing jobs while reducing global warming and air pollution.



As executive director of the Sierra Club, Carl Pope was instrumental in forging the unique alliance between the environmental organization and the United Steelworkers to fight for good jobs and a clean environment. He discussed the project in the following excerpts from interviews conducted during the "Road to Energy Independence Tour" with International President Leo W. Gerard.

### Why partner with the USW?

We are both very large and we have long traditions of fighting for the right thing. We're both local. Both organizations derive their strength from people who are rooted in their communities and they're rooted around the same values, like fair-

## Blue Green Alliance

### Carl Pope: We Have a Future Together

ness and opportunity, security in the future. It is very powerful to bring together the concerns of people where they live, where our members are, and the concerns of people where they work, which is what the Steelworkers bring.

Finally, we have a big overlap of common members, folks who would like to express both elements of their advocacy and activism through one alliance.

### Trade agreements

One impetus for the coalition is trade. That was a very easy one for us. I'm not sure you could write a trade deal that would split us.

### Fixing global warming

There are no silver bullets for global warming. There are silver BBs.

We need to make cars, trucks and SUVs with new technology that is efficient. Then we need to make sure that they're not just burning gas, they're burning bio-fuels as well.

We need to make sure that new buildings will be energy self-sufficient.

But we also need to retrofit old buildings, especially schools and hospitals, public facilities that are right now wasting money heating the great outdoors.

We know how to do that. It will create lots of jobs if we do it.

### America's energy policy

The energy sector is the least innovative sector of the American economy because the government keeps it that way.

The reality is we live in a rapidly changing world. The rule in today's world is to innovate or die.

Producing vehicles on assembly lines built in the 1950s is not innovation. When we make it difficult for electrical utilities to modernize the grid by installing digital switches, which every telephone uses, we're not innovating.

When we make it difficult for glass factories to find markets for innovative new products that would keep houses cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter, we're stopping innovation.

### Associate Member Program

It's been very exciting for a lot of our members to be able to join the Steelworkers through the Associate Member Program.

If you don't work in an organized workplace you can't join a labor union. For many of our members who had an interest in unions but didn't know what it was about, this has been a wonderful experience. It's an open door that's really important.

### The future

I'd like this collaboration to be a model for others.

I'd like to have these kinds of collaborations — across class lines, across sector lines — become the norm for the progressive movement.

As far as our partnership with the USW, I don't know nearly as many Steelworkers as I'd like to. I'd like to know that whenever I went into a community where there are Steelworkers and Sierra Club members, that they knew each other, that they liked each other, they trusted each other, and they all had common experiences of doing things to make their communities better places.

We have a future together. It's up to us whether it's a good future.