

## Power to Green!

By Anita Gupta

*If you want to do your part for clean energy but you're not ready for solar panels on your roof or a wind turbine in your yard, Anita Gupta has some options for you.*

Alternative Energy, Green Power, Clean Energy - these are different ways to say "renewable energy." Energy produced from sources such as wind (turbine), solar (sun), biomass, and hydro (water) is natural, renewable and clean - 100% free of carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, pollutants that cause smog, acid rain, greenhouse gases and which contribute to asthma, lung cancer and respiratory illnesses.

It is interesting to note that Texas has become the nation's best wholesale market for renewable energy and more and more customers continue to respond at the retail level for cleaner electricity. Due to this interest, the market has become competitive and there are many companies that sell "renewable energy" in the Dallas area. Companies that offer renewable power in the Dallas area include but are not limited to Kinetic Energy, Bounce Energy, Southwest Power and Light, Champion Energy Services, Green Mountain, StarTex, Steam Energy, DynaWatt and Gexa.

The Public Utility Commission of Texas has created an education website for electricity choices that helps customers compare options that are available to them in their area based on Zip code. (<http://www.powertochoose.org/index.asp>)

Here are some insights and tips on how to compare your options and choose a company that best serves your needs:

1. **Type and Content of renewable energy:** Some companies specialize in selling 100% renewable power. Others offer power with various percentages of renewable energy varying between 1% and 25%. Some companies' offer renewable energy through the procurement of Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) which help the State of Texas meet its renewable energy goals designed to save the environment. If you want a plan that is renewable, check the provider's the Electricity Fact Label (Click link for example) <https://www.dynowatt.com/Documents/Facts%20Labels/DPA%20EFL%20Go%20Green%20Residential%20Variable.pdf>) The EFL will tell you the type and content of renewable energy and emissions impact. If not available, feel free to call and ask as all retail electric providers are required to disclose certain information enabling customers to make educated decisions about choosing among competing offers.
2. **Fixed/Variable Contracts:** In most cases, companies offer renewable power contracts at fixed rates, while rates for conventional electricity rise and fall with fossil fuel prices and are variable. Fixed contracts are for 3, 6, 9 or 12 months and variable contracts vary from month to month.
3. **Rates:** Rates vary based on average monthly usage (500, 1000, 2000 kWh/per month) – check your typical usage and ask for rates accordingly.
4. **Comparative Analysis:** Renewable energy products are typically slightly higher in price than conventional electricity.
5. **Other charges:** monthly fee, early termination fee, TDSP charges
6. **Other considerations:** company culture, company affiliations as some REP's may be affiliated to power generation companies, contributions to environmental causes etc.

Below is a chart showing examples of products of companies that offer services in the Plano 75093 Zip code area. This chart is only for informational purposes. All rates must be confirmed with the service provider.

	DynoWatts	Abacus	GEXA	Champion	Southwest Power and Light
<b>Product</b>	<i>GoGreen</i> © by <i>Dynowatt</i> <i>TM</i>	Green Fixed	GEXA Green 12	Green Power-12	Renewable Healthy Heart of Texas E-Plan
<b>Website</b>	User friendly	User friendly	User friendly	User friendly	Average
<b>How is it green</b>	100% wind power	100% renewable	100% wind power	Wind/solar/bio- fuels	100% renewable
<b>Average * price/kWh</b>	10.2 cents	11 cents	10.3 cents	10.4 cents	10.3 cents

(\*Average price varies with monthly consumption. The above rates are for consumption of 1000 kWh and may be subject to change)

Additional background information:

Ever since the deregulation in the electricity market in the Dallas and Houston areas, the different parts of electricity service (generation, transmission and distribution and retail sales) are provided by different entities.

- **RETAIL ELECTRIC PROVIDERS (REP's)/ELECTRIC COMPANIES** sell electricity to residential and business customers and handle all customer service and billing issues.
- **POWER GENERATION COMPANIES** own and operate power plants, including plants fueled by coal, nuclear power, natural gas, wind, water, solar power, or other renewable sources. Power Generation Companies sell this power at wholesale to Retail Electric Providers, who package the power with transmission and delivery service for sale to retail customers. Retail Electric Providers are not permitted under Texas law to own power plants; however, they can be affiliated with a power generation company.
- **TRANSMISSION and DISTRIBUTION SERVICE PROVIDER (TDSP)** provide the actual delivery of the electricity, responsible for maintaining the poles, wires, and meter that deliver and measure the electricity consumed by your home or business, for reading your meter and providing amount of electricity that you consume to your REP, and for restoring service when there is a power outage.

As part of a statewide effort in Texas to reduce our dependence on fossil- based resources the new deregulation law in Texas (or most of Texas) in 1999 defined a new parameter that 2,000 megawatts (MW) of new renewable generating capacity be installed by 2009 and added to the 880 MW already in Texas. It also created a new electric structure requiring all Retail Electric Providers (REP's) or Electric Companies to sell a minimum amount of "renewable energy".