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Statewide groups join together to promote advanced energy

By **CHUCK SODER**
2:43 pm, September 13, 2011

Eight economic development agencies from across Ohio are joining forces in an effort to expand the state's advanced energy industry.

The organizations are forming a statewide group to “speak with a louder, unified voice” when trying to influence federal and state policies related to advanced energy, said Steve Caminati, executive director of the Ohio Business Council, one of the member agencies.

The new group — the name of which will be announced this Thursday at NorTech's Advanced Energy B2B Conference and Expo — will have some similarities to NorTech, which works to promote the growth of the advanced energy industry and other technology sectors in Northeast

Ohio.

The group will work to define where Ohio has strengths related to advanced energy and how it might capitalize on them, Mr. Caminati said. It also plans to help companies with an interest in advanced energy work together, he said, noting that NorTech plays a similar role in Northeast Ohio.

Mr. Caminati said the economic development agencies decided to create the new organization in part because they wanted to be part of a national advanced energy network that is being created. Additional information on the national network has yet to be released, he said.

Kimberly Gibson, director of the EWI Energy Center in Columbus, will serve as executive director of the new group, and Mr. Caminati will assist her. It has yet to be decided whether they will be paid by the group, or whether the group will reimburse its current employers for their work, Mr. Caminati said.

In addition to NorTech, the Ohio Business Council and EWI (formerly the Edison Welding Institute), other group members include CincyTech, the Dayton Development Coalition, Rocket Ventures of Toledo, TechColumbus and TechGrowth Ohio of Athens.

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