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# The Great Texas Wind Rush: How George Bush, Ann Richards, And A Bunch Of Tinkerers Helped The Oil And Gas State Win The Race To Wind Power (Peter T. Flawn Series In Natural Resources)





## Synopsis

In the late 1990s, West Texas was full of rundown towns and pumpjacks, aging reminders of the oil rush of an earlier era. Today, the towns are thriving as 300-foot-tall wind turbines tower above those pumpjacks. Wind energy has become Texas's latest boom, with the Lone Star State now leading the nation. How did this dramatic transformation happen in a place that fights federal environmental policies at every turn? In *The Great Texas Wind Rush*, environmental reporters Kate Galbraith and Asher Price tell the compelling story of a group of unlikely dreamers and innovators, politicians and profiteers. The tale spans a generation and more, and it begins with the early wind pioneers, precocious idealists who saw opportunity after the 1970s oil crisis. Operating in an economy accustomed to exploiting natural resources and always looking for the next big thing, their ideas eventually led to surprising partnerships between entrepreneurs and environmentalists, as everyone from Enron executives to T. Boone Pickens, as well as Ann Richards, George W. Bush and Rick Perry, ended up backing the new technology. In this down-to-earth account, the authors explain the policies and science that propelled the "windcatters" to reap the great harvest of Texas wind. They also explore what the future holds for this relentless resource that is changing the face of Texas energy.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Galbraith and Price understand the wonky side of energy policy, but they also know how to tell a story" —The Great Texas Wind Rush is a thoughtful, valuable story for anyone who cares about renewable energy or climate change, because while many people protest the impact of nuclear power, coal power and natural gas fracking, in the end, that's not enough. Vast new sources of power actually have to be built, not just talked about. That won't be cheap, easy or quick, but The Great Texas Wind Rush suggests that over the long haul, it's possible." (The Associated Press 2013-08-01)"The authors craft the story well, pulling from legendary tales of the Wild West, romantic literary and artistic accounts from the likes of Cormac McCarthy and Woody Guthrie and the gubernatorial regimes of Ann Richards and George W. Bush." (Environmental Defense Fund's Texas Clean Air Matters blog 2013-08-16)"In "The Great Texas Wind Rush," Kate Galbraith and Asher Price tell the strange, inspiring and at times funny story of how a culture known for Big Oil came to embrace Big Wind. Galbraith and Price understand the wonky side of energy policy, but they also know how to tell a story. The backdrops include Austin's Armadillo World Headquarters (a legendary nightclub), a small-town preacher who wanted to power his church with wind, new words (windcatter) and dry Texas humor. "The Great Texas Wind Rush" is a thoughtful, valuable story for anyone who cares about renewable energy or climate change, because while many people protest the impact of nuclear power, coal power and natural gas fracking, in the end, that's not enough. Vast new sources of power actually have to be built, not just talked about. That won't be cheap, easy or quick, but "The Great Texas Wind Rush" suggests that over the long haul, it's possible." (Associated Press 2013-08-05)"The story of how the oil and gas state became the country's biggest wind state is as compelling as it is unlikely. Kate Galbraith and Asher Price have written a totally engrossing, informative, and timely book that should be required reading for anyone hoping to understand modern Texas, the alternative energy business, or both. The Great Texas Wind Rush offers even more than that, actually. It's a fascinating account of a new industry's birth and evolution and all that goes on behind the scenes — the dreaming and sketching, the tinkering and engineering, the political scheming, the deals and compromises, the risks and blind luck, and everything else that it takes to bring a bold vision to life. The great accomplishment of this book is that it takes a deeply important subject and treats it with both the seriousness and the narrative flair it deserves. Among other things, The Great Texas Wind Rush is a damn good read." (Jake Silverstein, Editor-in-Chief, Texas Monthly)"This is new and very contemporary information. In a sense, it is almost a primary source. . . . The authors provide the only account of the recent politics of wind in Texas. No one else has done the interviews and research that tell us how Texas got to where it is today. The authors have done for Texas wind

development what Peter Asmus did for California." (Robert Righter, Research Professor of History, Southern Methodist University)"Enjoyable to read. . . . Captures the role of Texas as a policy leader in a way that is instructive for policymakers globally while also meeting standards of rigor that are suitable for academic use and having a narrative that will be of interest to the general reader. I consider myself an energy expert who is very familiar with the story of energy in Texas, yet I learned something on every single page." (Michael Webber, Associate Director, Center for International Energy and Environmental Policy, University of Texas at Austin)

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The Great Texas Wind Rush is a nice, quick read that captures the history of an unlikely industry and the characters that propelled it through four decades of bust and boom. Through the story, you also get an insight into politics (how several environmental and deregulatory laws actually got

passed), the energy business (a taste for the different players involved), and the realities of developing and implementing a new technology on the ground. The character profiles are great, without distracting from the story. I love the image of Bush, Jr, sitting back in the Texas Governor's office, boots kicked up on his desk, calling out to then Public Utility Chairman Pat Wood: "Oh, Pat, by the way, we like wind." "We what?" Wood stuttered, dumbfounded. "Go get smart on wind," Bush replied. The authors did a great job researching and accessing the various players, and their perspectives and quirks give humor and life to the tale. The book does not set out to be a history or analysis of alternative energy. There is some discussion of the economics of wind and the history of wind power outside Texas, but it's primarily there to support the story and provide context for the happenings within the state. This is less of a dry scientific or economic treatise than it is an entertaining dessert read. No prior knowledge is required, and it will resonate with Texans and non-Texans alike.

As someone who is concerned about climate change and energy security, it is exciting to see Texas, with its deep oil and gas roots, taking the lead on the practical development of wind energy. This book is an enjoyable read that illustrates the personalities and places along the way. It traces the story from the early inventors who generated electricity from wind on farms and ranches, to the visionaries who built the first small wind farms in Texas, to the legislation that paved the way for wind development, to the professional large-scale industry of today. While Texas has much to be proud of, the authors also highlight some of the limitations of these developments, such as the need for expensive energy transmission infrastructure to get the energy from its sources in rural Texas to its users in major cities. All in all, a well-written history of a curious and inspiring Texas energy success.

Our reading group, which focuses on natural resources, chose this book and we all enjoyed reading about both wind energy and the Texas can-do spirit. What makes this a good read, is the descriptive nature of the many players (and some true characters!), as well as the politics covering wind on both the federal and state level (California wind policy gets discussed, including from Jerry Brown's first round as Governor). I would recommend this book to anyone interested in the nature of wind energy, alternative energy sources, and alternative energy policy in both Texas and the United States.

This is a must-read for anyone who cares about the future of renewable energy in the United States.

The authors delve into the stories behind the seeming irony in Texas holding the country's leadership position in wind power. The lessons behind this history will be informative for policy makers and activists, as well as for ordinary citizens with an interest in our energy future. The book is accessible and combines anecdotes about eccentric characters with analysis of policy and macro-level events.

That the state of Texas, the unquestioned king of the oil and gas industry would lead our country in the development of one of the leading alternative energy sources. A fascinating, well-written history of the wind energy in Texas and other parts of the country. Lots of people and projects to keep up with, but still very interesting.

I really like some of the history and I like the wildcatter personality portrayed, but so much of the background info of some of the characters is just bland and you really find yourself wondering if you'll make it to the next interesting parts.

Fantastically done - a great book with lots of intriguing history woven into politics woven into a sense of place. At 200 pages this is an enjoyable quick read with lots of information.

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