



Each year, the American Energy Society surveys the energy landscape and spotlights the people, media, technologies, and artists that made extraordinary contributions to energy and sustainability.

Here are the 2022 winners.

PEOPLE

Energy Person of the Year — Global **Volodymyr Zelensky**



Though emissions and the changing climate are constant concerns, the primary cause of the global energy crisis in 2022 was Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The conflict highlighted energy insecurities in both the fossil and renewable sectors, disrupted the global economy, and made all of Europe vulnerable.

It could have been worse.

Had Ukraine fallen, Putin would have taken a dominant position over the global energy sector. But Ukraine didn't fall, which allowed geopolitical relationships, energy markets, and the global economy time to adapt.

There are many heroes in Ukraine, but leaders matter. President Zelensky, without any political or military experience, was the anchor that held the global energy system together. Putin may still respond and take control of the quagmire, but Zelensky, representing the will of Ukraine, is our 2022 Global Energy Person of the Year.

Energy Person of the Year — United States

Jigar Shah



Some private financial markets faltered in 2022, but public funding for energy has never been stronger, thanks in large part to Jigar Shah, who has the experience to lead the US Department of Energy Loan Program Office with unwavering courage and conviction.

Shah took office in 2021 and immediately had an impact, boldly pushing the federal government to support "deployment" rather than its traditional risk-averse, "proof-of-concept" approach. Indeed, at the Stanford Global Energy Forum, with luminaries like Senator Joe Manchin, Secretary John Kerry, and Chair of Exxon Darren Woods in attendance, the hosts introduced Jigar Shah as "the most important person in energy." We concur. Jigar Shah is our 2022 US Energy Person of the Year.

Youth Activist of the Year

Autumn Peltier



Autumn Peltier from Manitoulin Island in Ontario Canada, is a global indigenous rights and water activist from the Wikwemikong First Nations.

In 2016, at the age of 12, Autumn confronted Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at an Assembly of First Nations about clean drinking water for Indigenous communities. In 2019, Autumn was appointed Chief Water Commissioner of the Anishinabek Nation, addressed global delegates at the United Nations, served as a keynote contributor in Geneva at the World Economic Forum with Greta Thundberg, and filmed her movie, *The Water Walker*. Peltier continues to work with the United Nations and other leading global platforms, partners with The DreamCatcher Charitable Foundation to support short-term water relief solutions for families across First Nations communities, and was the runner up finalist for the Children International Nobel Peace Prize.

STEM Librarian of the Year

Jimmy McKee

Entrepreneurship Librarian, Carnegie Mellon University

"It's an honor to be selected for this award from the American Energy Society. I receive this on behalf of my colleagues at CMU Libraries, who all serve in key roles facilitating our community's research and information needs. With our hearts in the work, we're able to partner with and support the innovative outputs of our community – striving to leave positive, transformative impacts upon our society."



– Jimmy McKee, on what it means to receive this prestigious award from the American Energy Society

In case you missed it ...

AES Energy Writer of the Year, the premier literary award for energy

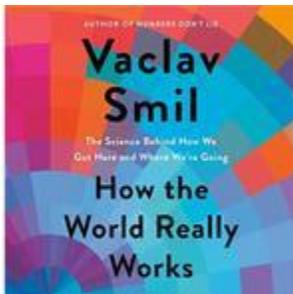
Amy Harder

[Amy Harder](#) is the executive editor of Cipher, a weekly newsletter supported by [Breakthrough Energy](#), that scrutinizes in low-carbon technologies and the transformations needed to get to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions.



MEDIA AWARDS

Best book about energy



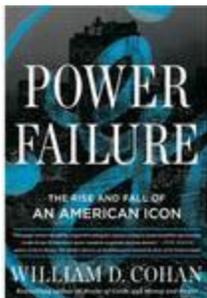
How the World Really Works

by Vaclav Smil

Explores seven fundamental areas that govern human survival and prosperity, covering energy in chapters 1 and 2.

Note: Vaclav Smil was the [AES Energy Writer of the Year 2019](#)

Best energy business history

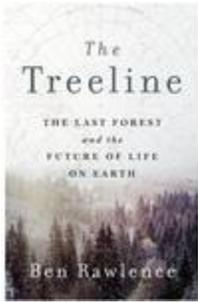


Power Failure: The Rise and Fall of an American Icon

by William Cohan

The dramatic rise—and unimaginable fall—of GE, America's most iconic corporation.

Best book about sustainability

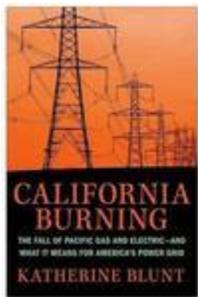


The Treeline: The Last Forest and the Future of Life on Earth

by Ben Rawlence

A powerful, poetic, and deeply absorbing account of the “lung” at the top of the world. (Voted "Best Books We Love in 2022" by NPR.)

Best book about energy/sustainability current events

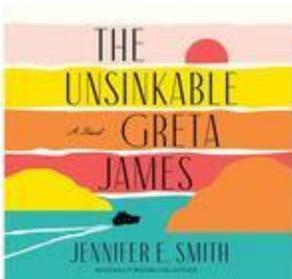


California Burning: The Fall of Pacific Gas and Electric

by Katherine Blunt

An urgent narrative about the decline of California’s largest utility company and the human cost of infrastructure failure.

Best book (fiction) with energy/sustainability as a subtheme



The Unsinkable Greta James

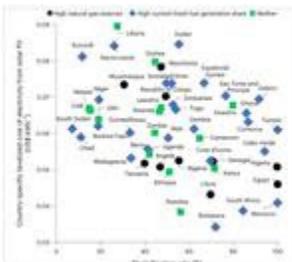
by Jennifer E. Smith

Set in Alaska, the "power" of the region matches the intensity of Greta and Conrad’s grief.

Other Media Awards

Most interesting peer-reviewed article about energy

(For a general audience)



"Africa needs context-relevant evidence to shape its clean energy future," by Yacob Mulugetta,

Youba Sokona, Philipp A. Trotter, et al.

An interdisciplinary and majority African group of authors spotlights the challenges and uncertainties that each country faces in the energy transition.

Best indie energy blog



Deanna Zhang

A self-described recovering investment banker obsessed with startups and the energy transition; the blog's infographics are brilliant.

Best use of Twitter



Julio Friedmann

This social media platform may be problematic these days, but posts by @CarbonWrangler are always thoughtful, provocative, and often creative.

Best publication by a US National Lab



100% Clean Electricity by 2035

by NREL

There are brilliant studies published at every US national lab, but this report by NREL should influence public and private investments for the next decade; key findings include: 1) Technology deployment must rapidly scale up; 2) Significant amounts of transmission capacity must be added.

Best trade magazine article about energy



"Why Energy Insecurity Is Here to Stay"

The Economist (March 26, 2022)

Four trillion dollars of oil and gas exports over the two decades of Vladimir Putin's rule have paid for the tanks, guns, and missiles now killing Ukrainians....

Best podcast about energy and/or sustainability



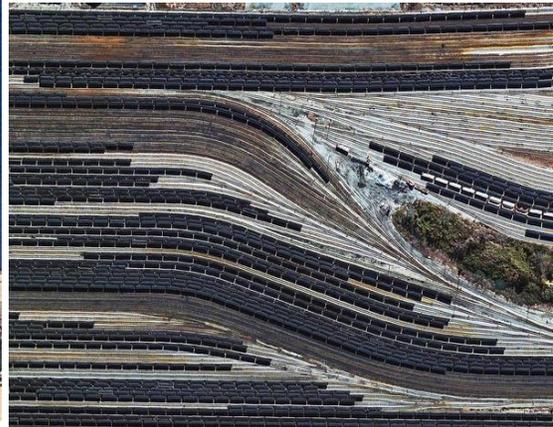
MCJ Collective

The MCJ (aka "My Climate Journey") tale begins in 2019 when Jason Jacobs tries to figure out what's happening with the climate.

Photos of the Year



Left: statues celebrating women in STEM around the Smithsonian Castle, Washington, DC - photo by Evy Mages; right: Russia attacks the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant in Ukraine, the largest nuclear facility in Europe.



Left: Houthi rebels attack an Aramco oil refinery in Jizan, southern Saudi Arabia - photo by Andrej Isakovic, Getty Images; right: overhead view of Lamberts Point Pier 6 in Norfolk, Virginia, the largest coal-loading railroad station in the Northern Hemisphere (a fleet of 23,000 coal cars) - photo by Daily Overview.



Left: damage at a street corner in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida in Grand Isle, Louisiana, September 2, 2022 - photo by Adrees Latif, Reuters; right: Google Maps calls it the Mountain of Garbage outside the Delhi suburb of Ghazipur, India. Locals say "Mount Everest" began growing about 17 years ago, and still the lorries come - photo by Getty.

Winner: Photo of the Year, 2022

Panda Power



Above: The [Panda Power Plant](#), a giant 50MW solar array consisting of 170,000 photovoltaic panels spread across 100 hectares (250 acres) in Datong, China - photo by UNDP.

MARKET AND TECHNOLOGY AWARDS

Most interesting small energy/sustainability company (tie)

Air Company

Turns captured carbon into commercial products.

Air Protein

Turns elements in the air into sustainable protein. Air Chicken, Air Scallops, Air Fish Fillet.



Energy company of the year



Equinor - Northern Lights

Equinor - [Northern Lights](#) started earning this award years ago. In 2013, the Norwegian government committed to an ambitious vision of decarbonizing hard-to-abate industries, from capture to transport to storage. In 2016, Equinor was given control of the project, informally referred to as [Longship](#), and focused entirely on the "storage" phase of the carbon value chain. In 2017, Shell and TotalEnergies joined Equinor to support development of the transport phase of the chain. Equinor will begin operating [phase 1](#) of Northern Lights, the first cross-border, open-source CO2 transport and storage company in the world, and by 2024 it will store 1.5 million tons of CO2 safely and permanently underground. (Editor's note: Northern Lights will share datasets, and it should also be noted that Equinor does great work with [Techstars](#) too.)

Most interesting corporate sustainability program

Patagonia

Hard to top Yvon Chouinard, Patagonia founder who donated the entire \$3 billion company to fight climate change.



Most innovative utility (tie)

Southern Company

For its Energy Innovation Center and SO Prize for employees who devise inventive solutions.

Xcel

For its Resiliency-As-A-Service and "pink pilot project" (use of nuclear to produce hydrogen).

Most interesting firm investing in energy and sustainability

Energy Impact Partners

Every year since its founding in 2015, AES could have named EIP the most influential investment firm in energy; indeed, the firm has had a powerful impact on global decarbonization efforts. However, this year was especially noteworthy when EIP launched its first European Fund.

Most interesting technology to watch in 2023

AI

Energy companies are adopting emerging AI software to compensate for skills shortages and to enable safer and more reliable operations as energy technologies become more complex.



Most impactful technological development in 2022

Remote operations

Restricted movement due to global covid lockdowns pushed energy companies—but especially oil and gas—to reimagine operations and adopt remote technologies at a faster rate than ever before.



Best of the American Energy Society

Best issue of Energy Today:

The Power of the Tennessee Valley Authority

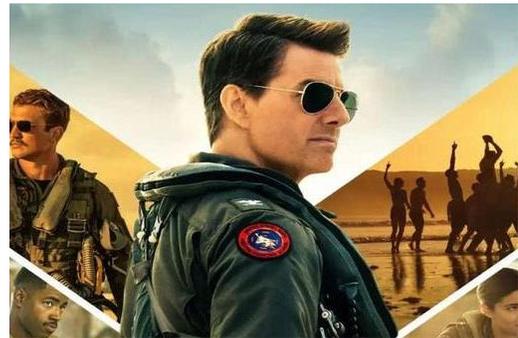
Energy "Art & Entertainment" Awards

The best popular movie (sort of) about energy — nominees

- Top Gun: Maverick (Three words: supersonic jet fuel.)
- Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness (A superhero with infinite "power".)
- Jurassic World: Dominion (The dinosaurs are the source of ecological disaster?)
- Thor: Love and Thunder (Mjölmir, the thunder god's hammer, has a lot of power.)
- Spider-Man: No Way Home (Another superhero with infinite power.)
- Sonic the Hedgehog: (An anthropomorphic animated superhero with infinite power.)
- Elvis ("The power of my love" song-title and lyric.)
- Uncharted (Hydro- and wind-power help the protagonists trace Magellan's path.)
- Nope (What kind of fuel does the UFO use to hover indefinitely?)

Winner — Top Gun; Maverick

The clear winner considering that Miles Teller (the actor who plays Bradley Bradshaw) says that doctors found jet fuel in his blood while filming on location for Top Gun: Maverick.

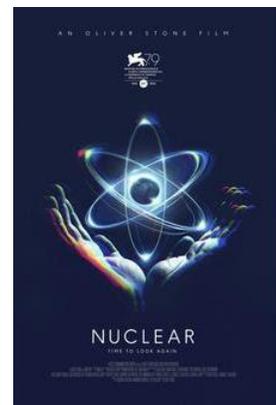


Best documentary

Nuclear

Directed by Oliver Stone

Stone argues that the perceived dangers of nuclear energy are dwarfed by the impending threat of climate change.



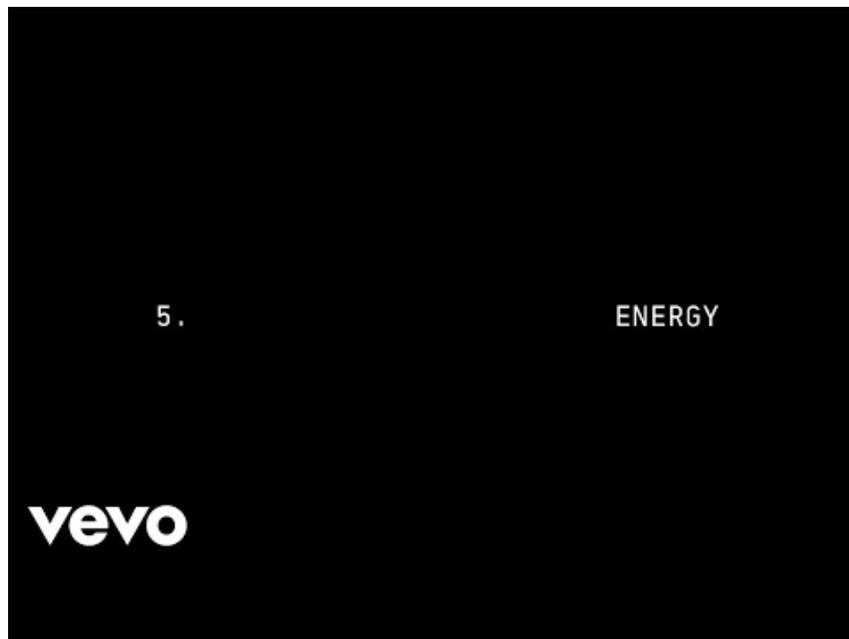
Energy/environment (related) song of the year

Note: With apologies, some of the nominated songs may contain inappropriate language and some of the music videos may cause seizures; the AES editorial board watched and listened to each song but was unable to understand some of the lyrics. The nominees are:

- I Ain't Worried, by OneRepublic (maybe we should worry?)
- Super Freaky Girl, by Nicki Minaj (if nothing else, Miss Minaj has a lot of energy.)
- Bad Habit, Steve Lacy (lyrics never mention or reference "emissions," but they could.)
- As It Was, by Harry Styles ("You know it's not the same as it was." Is Harry singing about the climate?)
- Sunroof, by Nicky Youre and dazy (This year's walk-up-song for solar advocates.)
- Girl On Fire, by Kameron Marlowe (More like "World On Fire")

Winner — **Energy**, by Beyoncé

(Editor's note: To be honest, no one at AES is sure if this is a good song or not; it won the 2022 award simply because of its title.)



Energy Artist of the Year

Metaverse Solar

Artwork by Metaverse Solar, using AI/Machine Learning and 3D modeling software, by Greg S-K Ness.



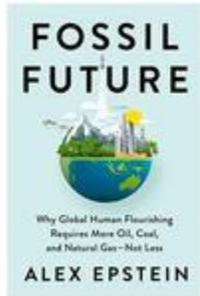
Best of the American Energy Society

Best original report:

H2 Influencers, the hydrogen experts to watch

Other Book Awards

Best book about fossil fuels

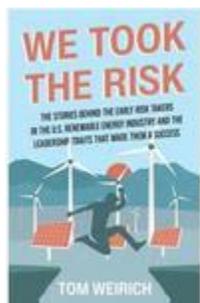


Fossil Future: Why Global Human Flourishing Requires More Oil, Coal, and Natural Gas - Not Less

by Alex Epstein

The author argues that the benefits of fossil fuels far outweigh their side effects—including climate impacts.

Best biography about cleantech

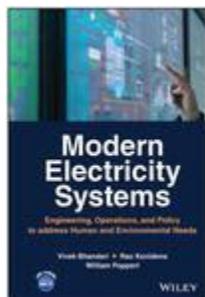


We Took the Risk

by Tom Weirich

The stories behind the early risk-takers in the US renewable energy industry and the leadership traits that made them a success.

The best book for energy engineers

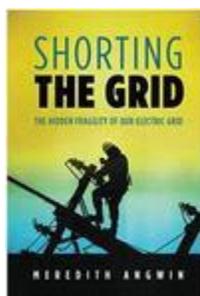


Modern Electricity Systems

by Vivek Bhandari, Rao Konidena, and William Poppert

A “toolbox” to make informed decisions about electricity systems.

Best book about energy infrastructure

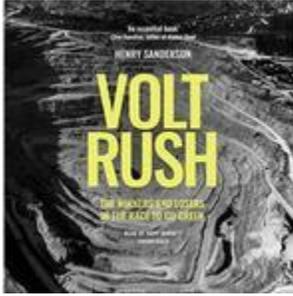


Shorting the Grid: The Hidden Fragility of Our Electric Grid

by Meredith Angwin

An exposé of the deregulated portions of the US electric grid.

Best energy futurist book

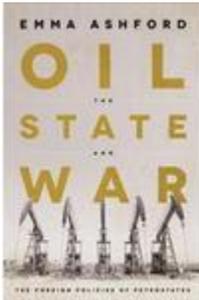


Volt Rush

by Henry Sanderson

The climate crisis leaves us no choice but to build a better energy system than the one that we take for granted.

Best book about energy policy



Oil, the State, and War: The Foreign Policies of Petrostates

by Emma Ashford

Why are oil-rich states more likely to start war than their oil-dependent counterparts?

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