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PUBLIC RADIO'S "BURN: AN ENERGY JOURNAL" ROLLS OUT TWO-HOUR ELECTION SPECIAL EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF INDIVIDUALS, NEW IDEAS AND REVOLUTIONARY TECHNOLOGIES ON NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY

VETERAN RADIO JOURNALIST ALEX CHADWICK LEADS INVESTIGATION OF HOW "THE POWER OF ONE" IS AFFECTING AMERICA'S QUEST OF ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE ISSUES

Los Angeles, California - September 17, 2012 - Public Radio's *BURN: An Energy Journal* is back this Fall with a two-hour Election Special titled "The Power of One," a far-ranging examination of how individuals, new scientific ideas, grassroots initiatives and potentially game-changing inventions are informing the energy debate in this Presidential Election year, and redefining America's quest for greater energy independence. Produced by Peabody Award-winning SoundVision Productions © and anchored by one of public radio's most trusted journalists and master storytellers, Alex Chadwick, *BURN's* Election Special will be fed to Public Radio's nationwide network of 600-plus stations on September 26 and 27. Each station will decide how and when to air the documentary special (check your local listings) before Election Day on November 6, 2012.

For *BURN: An Energy Journal's* Election Special, Chadwick and a team of experienced reporters do what Public Radio does best – find intimate, human-scale stories to explore the complicated energy challenges that face communities all over the country and around the world. They travel to the Arctic Ocean, the world's newest energy frontier, to Pennsylvania's natural gas-rich "Marcellus Shale" region where the national "fracking" controversy runs deep, and to a university laboratory in

Colorado where a woman scientist is building a battery that aspires to be the “Holy Grail of green technology.” (See descriptions of all Election Special stories below).

“Energy and climate are such big stories – there is a reason that both campaigns often talk about the economy, jobs and energy all tied together,” explains Chadwick, who hosted the first two **BURN** specials earlier this year. “It’s easy to get overwhelmed by how big these topics are. What **BURN** tries to do is tell smaller stories that provide insight into how people’s lives are changed by the energy choices they and others around them make. ‘The Power of One’ is about how individuals can make a difference, even in something so globally immense as energy.”

BURN: An Energy Journal’s Election Special features these stories:

> **THE MARCELLUS SHALE** is a vast, underground repository of natural gas that runs beneath parts of Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio and West Virginia. The extraction of that fossil fuel has helped resuscitate Pennsylvania’s economy, providing residents with jobs and lucrative mineral leases. For the nation, the Marcellus Shale has meant a bountiful and relatively cheap new energy source. But the Marcellus Shale has generated considerable controversy, too. Some argue that hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) -- the injection underground of vast quantities of water and chemicals to mine the natural gas -- is harmful to the environment. Chadwick illuminates all sides of the “fracking” debate, interviewing a local official who sees natural gas exploration as a significant economic boon to his poor rural county, a worried mother of 12-year-old twins who was displaced from her mobile home park when a fracking services company came to build a pump station in her backyard, to a local farmer who is making a small fortune leasing out his family farmland for drilling, to a company truck driver who is happy for his job but who admits that the 24/7 trucking operation to support the natural gas wells has turned quiet country roads into thundering freeways, and to a local activist who worries about the long-term dangers of the millions of gallons of toxic “fracking water” that the wells are producing. Chadwick’s reporting is supplemented online by powerful photographs of the displaced mobile home park residents, taken by National Geographic photographer and Pennsylvania resident Lynn Johnson.

> **THE OIL-RICH ARCTIC OCEAN** is in the crosshairs of the search for new energy reserves. Billion-dollar-exploration scenarios are playing out across the circumpolar North - in Russia, Norway, Greenland and in the U.S. In Alaska, it's happening right now, with the Obama administration's election year blessing. The U.S. Geological Survey estimates the Arctic holds about 22 percent of the world's undiscovered oil and natural gas resources. The Alaska reserves are potentially so large that, once tapped, the bounty would mean an unprecedented level of energy security for the United States. **BURN's** reporter on this story is Elizabeth Arnold. She formerly covered the White House and Congress for NPR and was featured regularly on the PBS Newshour. She left Washington to return to Alaska, a state she had lived in and reported on for many years. Arnold takes listeners to the far north -- two hundred miles above the Arctic Circle to the top of Alaska, where Inupiaq (Native Alaskan) Eskimos are torn between the benefits of new oil development and the risks Arctic oil will pose to their thousand-year-old whaling culture.

> **WIND, SOLAR, ELECTRIC CARS** -- all have a toehold in the American energy mix, but there's one technical dilemma holding them back: batteries. Batteries are essential energy storage devices for anything touted as clean tech but right now they are limited to a few hours of performance. Plus, they're expensive, big and chemically dangerous. There's an international race on to build a better battery. The people in that race will not only shift our energy future, they stand to make a lot of money. Amy Prieto, a chemist at Colorado State, has formulated a battery that might have the right stuff. A cell-phone-sized prototype that recharges in five minutes, discharges slowly, can last for years and is manufactured using water instead of toxic chemicals. Chadwick visits Prieto and her team to learn just what the "Prieto Battery" is all about.

> **BURN IS ALSO GOING TO MICHIGAN** this election year to report a story about power -- the power of one election to alter dramatically the manner in which a state consumes and conserves energy; and the power of wind, which could emerge as the state's major source of post-election energy generation. Here's the background: There is a referendum on the Michigan ballot this fall that would require 25 percent of the state's electricity to come from renewable resources by the year 2025. It's called "25 X 25." If the referendum passes, Michigan would emerge as a model state with regard to setting renewable energy standards. It's estimated that 80% of the renewable energy will come from 3,000 new wind turbines to be installed in

clusters, or wind farms, around the state. Proponents claim that electricity from wind is now cost effective, close to the cheapest way to generate electricity, and it's clean. Opponents say that wind energy has been cheap only because of large federal subsidies, which are scheduled to expire at the end of the year, and that the end result of the referendum, if passed, will be higher utility bills for the consumer. Our reporter for this story is veteran public radio producer Scott Carrier.

Chadwick also interviews an eccentric inventor and racecar enthusiast named Mike Pethel in a cluttered garage workshop in Venice, California, where he is constructing a super-fast car – and it's green. Pethel's high-performance electric engine can generate 800 horsepower and go from zero-to-60 mph in three seconds, which can beat any Ferrari ever built. The Election Special host also speaks with a former Energy Department scientist who spearheaded an all-out government offensive in search of game-changing energy technologies.

BURN: An Energy Journal is produced by SoundVision Productions in partnership with APM's Marketplace with a grant from the National Science Foundation. The **BURN** radio specials are distributed by American Public Media. Share your ideas and opinions with **BURN** on Facebook.

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