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## How to make a play in the smart electrical grid: executives

PALM SPRINGS, Calif (Reuters) - Investors in clean technology see the expected upgrade to a smart electrical grid in the United States as a massive opportunity, but finding the right investments will require patience.

The sector includes high-flying start-ups and heavily regulated utilities. Technology giants like Google Inc and Microsoft also are moving to the area.

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The smart grid will allow two-way communications between utilities and their customers. Analysts have said it will marry clean power, electric vehicles, advanced meters, and power storage into a seamless network, modernizing thousands of miles of outdated power lines and allowing for more efficient energy use.

Increased momentum for smart grid technology helped push power storage and energy efficiency stocks to perform the best on the WilderHill New Energy Global Innovation Index in 2009, which tracks the performance of 86 global clean energy stocks.

The sector also has seen a boost from the Obama administration, which announced a \$3.4 billion package in 2009 to help build a smart electric grid meant to trim utility bills, reduce blackouts and carry power generated by solar and wind energy.

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