A flywheel in the ointment

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I have been big on flywheels for electrical energy storage for quite some time [1]. So it was quite a disappointment to me to hear that high tech flywheel company Beacon Power [2] did a Solyndra and reneged on a government loan because it could not finance its debts from income.

It looks like another case of "free money" not being so free after all. However, a buyer has been found for the assets of the company [3]. Among those assets are an operating electrical storage plant in New York, and the buyer has plans to build a second storage plant in Pennsylvania.

However, the claims of the buyer appear to be wildly optimistic in terms of the worth of the operating plant and the intellectual property that made the plant possible. If wind (and much later) solar power are ever going to become effective grid providers, fast charge and discharge storage is going to be needed. Gigawatts worth. And for that a flywheel is just the ticket. If the economics can be made to work.

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Engineering is the art of making what you want from what you can get at a profit.

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http://www.ecnmag.com/blogs/2012/10/flywheel-ointment

Links:
[1] http://powerandcontrol.blogspot.com/2004/09/re-inventing-wheel.html
[2] http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/apr/9/feds-call-bankrupt-solar-firm-an-empty-shell/?page=all
[3] http://news.cnet.com/8301-11386_3-57372189-76/doe-backed-beacon-power-finds-buyer-post-bankruptcy/
[4] http://spacetimepro.blogspot.com/