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Green Jobs Boom for San Diego?

By Paul Hannam

Green jobs are in the news every day, especially as they might be one of the few areas of growth in the next few years. The Jan. 4 edition of the LA Times reported that renewable energy is "the only sector that appears to be making room for more employees despite the recession."

President Obama has pledged \$80 billion of the stimulus package to promote green initiatives and create tens of thousands of new jobs in the next two years. This includes \$38 billion for energy efficiency, \$28 billion for renewable energy and \$15 billion for public transit and clean transportation. The president's goal is to create 3 million new jobs, many of which will be in green industries, and he has created a task force to support his plans.

Our new president believes that the green economy will lead us out of recession and, in the process, transform our economy into a 21st century green powerhouse. So what does this mean for San Diego and where will the jobs be?

Perhaps our biggest source of jobs will be in the solar industry. California's massive investment in renewable energy is already attracting many new solar businesses to San Diego, and we should do what we can to create a cluster of environmental businesses to take advantage of the green jobs boom. According to the American Solar Energy Society, by 2030 there will be 40 million new jobs, or 1 in 4 employees in the United States will be working in renewable energy. These renewable energy companies will also require managers and executives in all functions like operations, technology, finance, marketing, sales and human resources.

A second big area of job growth will be in green buildings – in construction, engineering, maintenance and retrofitting. This is a huge opportunity to create jobs and reduce energy and water consumption, and our sunny climate is perfect for solar power in residential and commercial buildings. Both new homes and offices, and the retrofitting of old ones, will be hot sectors in the coming years.

There is also a need for consultants to work with organizations to go green, as sustainability can lead to major energy savings, increased productivity and an enhanced brand. Every business in San Diego will need to address issues of resource conservation and, the sooner they get started the better, so they do not get left behind as new regulation and consumer demand builds the pressure for change.



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There is real substance to the green jobs boom and, what is more, this is work that cannot be outsourced as easily as jobs in the manufacturing industry. We need workers here to install and maintain solar and wind installations, and to construct green buildings.

A green career is also attractive because it combines the financial rewards of a business career with the psychological benefits of engaging your values and finding meaning and purpose by contributing to our society. All we need now is to retrain our work force for the new jobs, and also educate executives, professionals and entrepreneurs to understand the business case for going green.

An advertorial submitted by Alliant University. Paul Hannam is a green thought leader at the Marshall Goldsmith School of Management at Alliant University. For more information, please visit mgsm.alliant.edu or e-mail Hannam at phannam@alliant.edu.