

8-year plan aims to boost green industry and jobs

An ambitious plan to grow green jobs in Oregon was recently released by the Oregon Workforce Investment Board.



Robin Onaclea Scott

“The Oregon Green Jobs Growth Plan 2011-2018, an Eight Year Map to a Green Economy,” was required by Oregon House Bill 3300, which called for a green jobs growth initiative.

The 113-page document profiles, prioritizes and sets job growth goals for eight green industry sectors.

A 30 percent job growth goal over an eight-year span was set for four targeted sectors: energy efficiency; renewable energy production and generation; green manufacturing; and energy transmission and storage.

A second tier of industry sectors includes green building; transportation; agriculture/sustainable forestry; and environmental technologies and services. These are targeted for 13 percent growth.

The plan also calls for adding or significantly expanding at least 80 green businesses and increasing the revenues of the eight identified industry sectors by 30 percent.

Lack of access to capital and economic development incentives are cited as barriers to green job creation. Inadequate work force skills, regulatory requirements and the need for greater coordination among economic development, workforce development and educational institutions are also limiting green job creation.

The plan proposes developing public-private partnerships within each identified green sector. Business, government, education, work force development, labor and others will collaborate to identify specific industry sector needs, opportunities and barriers to growth.

“Oregon has a relative strength in

the green jobs sector. The question we tried to answer is how to build on that,” said Agnes Balassa, director of the Oregon Workforce Partnership and a Green Jobs Task Force member. “Oregon also has a number of well developed sector partnerships, including several in Lane County.”

Examples of Lane County sector partnerships include the Emerald Valley High Performance Enterprise Consortium, which provides lean and high performance training, and the Community Healthcare Education Network, which develops career pathways for low-wage workers and ensures that local health care education is meeting the needs of employers.

Proposed near-term strategies in the Green Jobs Growth Plan include:

- ◆ Increase available cash and credit for companies in targeted green sectors, including increasing venture capital investment in Oregon, local entrepreneur development and a refundable income tax credit.

- ◆ Provide marketing assistance, such as a national campaign promoting Oregon’s green economy, and work on recruiting new, clean technology companies to Oregon.

- ◆ Develop and promote green jobs training and career pathway opportunities. Oregon is already considered a leader in this area.

- ◆ Monitor energy and climate legislation to capitalize on emerging opportunities, such as energy and performance standards for buildings in Oregon, tax credit programs, and changes to the Renewable Energy Standard.

Download the full plan (as a PDF) at tinyurl.com/2wc5l92.

If you have questions about training your work force, contact Robin Onaclea Scott, business service coordinator at Lane Workforce Partnership, at robino@laneworkforce.org or 541-682-7224.