

## **HEADLINE...As region gets greener, colleges train work force**

**By Bill Lindelof - Bee Staff Writer**

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The six-county Sacramento region is home to an estimated 73 "green" companies, according to the city of Sacramento, and the Los Rios Community College District wants to ready an environmentally aware work force.

The Los Rios district is expected today to announce the creation of three new programs at its Sacramento-area campuses to train students in clean and green technology.

"With more than 70 clean and green companies in this region, we need to be preparing a work force," Chancellor Brice Harris said in an interview.

The new programs include a solar technology technician certificate program at American River College, a green building design and construction certificate at Cosumnes River College and a certificate at Sacramento City College in the field of energy management systems in heating, ventilation and air-conditioning equipment.

The chancellor noted that new homes outfitted with solar power electrical systems will eventually need maintenance. "In addition to somebody knowing the electrical system of a home, they also need to know how that interfaces with the solar system," he said.

The certificate programs are scheduled to begin in fall 2008.

The Sacramento Area Commerce and Trade Organization is attempting to recruit more green businesses to Sacramento -- at the former Sacramento Army Depot.

Last month, the City Council approved a resolution to market the old depot's existing enterprise zone to clean-energy firms in an effort to make the city a center for the fast-growing industry.

Businesses within the enterprise zone qualify for financial incentives such as state sales tax rebates on equipment purchases, employee training funds and employment tax credits.

Robert Burris, deputy director of Sacramento Area Commerce and Trade Organization, said green companies are interested in coming to the Sacramento region for several reasons, including the enterprise zone, research conducted by University of California, Davis, and the progressive practices of local utilities.

As the region grows, and green tech increases, he said, "we need a broad range of workers -- from technicians in biodiesel facilities to installers working for solar companies, as well as people working in the business, marketing and administrative side of the industries."

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