



\*One Oregon One Environment Fall 2010

# One\*

## We Can Work It Out

### How to rebuild Oregon's economy and safeguard its environment at the same time

By Andrea Durbin

Oregon's current unemployment rate is 10.6%. The impacts of this economic downturn are being felt all over the state—from Burns to Astoria, from Portland to Medford. We need to put people back to work, but the hard part is creating the *right* kind of jobs. Of course that means positions that offer workers a good wage and benefits, will be around for the foreseeable future, and can be

filled by displaced workers, as well as those just entering the workforce. But it also means creating the kind of work that will ultimately benefit all Oregonians—economically, environmentally and socially—contributing to the wellbeing of our entire state.

Turns out, investing in the green economy is particularly well suited to do all

of this. Renewable energy projects are creating jobs in Eastern Oregon. Oregon is developing new industries around electric vehicles. These 'green jobs' are not limited to the clean energy sector. For example, a study by Smart Growth America found that stimulus investments in public transit produced nearly twice as many jobs as those in highway projects. That's because public transit spends less money on land acquisitions and more money on building. It also requires a workforce with diverse skills and leads to more long-term employment because people are needed to run and maintain the buses and light rail. Investing in public transit doesn't just create more and better jobs, it also helps reduce air pollution, as people drive less, and helps tackle the obesity epidemic, as people walk more.

This is just one example of how growing a green economy helps us create a more sustainable way of doing business and going about daily life. As someone who is committed to safeguarding what we love about Oregon—clean air and water, an unpolluted landscape, and a healthy Oregon economy—I wholeheartedly support that.



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Header: Oregon Solar Highway, © Gary Weber, ODOT

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### What is a green job?

Oregon defines them as jobs that:

- Increase energy efficiency
- Produce renewable energy
- Prevent, reduce or mitigate environmental degradation
- Clean up and restore the natural environment
- Provide training and support for above

# Building a Green Economy

by Jana Gastellum

Gary Weber, ODOT

**There's been a lot of talk about green jobs in the last few years. But what is a green job?** According to the state of Oregon, it's any position that helps to increase energy efficiency, produce renewable energy, address the problems of environmental degradation, or cleans up the natural environment. It's the electrical worker who installs solar panels, the person who manages a recycling plant, the steel worker who manufactures wind turbines or street cars, the engineer who designs smart transportation or storm water systems—just to name a few.

Green jobs are important because they provide people with a paycheck to do things that will tackle climate change and safeguard the natural environment we love. Equally vital is the fact that those paychecks tend to offer higher wages and help create a sustainable

economy that will drive Oregon's growth now and far into the future.

### Ahead of the Pack

Oregon has led the nation putting people to work in green jobs. In fact, between 1998 and 2007, positions in Oregon's clean energy economy—which is just one sector of green employment—grew 6.5 times faster than overall jobs, according to Pew Charitable Trust. In 2008, the Oregon Employment Department counted 51,402 green jobs in over 220 occupations.

We can thank our sustainability ethic for this leadership—we are ahead of the curve in developing ways to create a more environmentally in-tune way of life, and this has positioned us to take advantage of growth in green-job sectors. Oregon also has excellent research

universities that spur collaboration and innovation (see our article on Green Chemistry—another exciting growth industry for Oregon—on page 5) and, most importantly, policies that attract and encourage green job development.

### Policies Matter

While we all wish the economic recovery would be quicker, green-job creation signals a realistic path to reducing the state's double-digit unemployment rate with positions that will be around for generations to come—and can't be exported abroad or out of state. But in order for us to do this, Oregon needs to continue to embrace the kind of policies and programs that have proven, and will continue to be, the key to success.

Take Oregon's transportation fuel situation. We currently import 98% of the

fuel we use in our cars and trucks, making us incredibly reliant on foreign oil and workers. But the state's Low-Carbon Fuel Standard program—which will reduce the affects of climate change by reducing the amount of carbon in transportation fuels 10% by 2020—will actually be a boon to lower-carbon fuels like advanced biofuels and electricity.

That shift could create a significant number of jobs in Oregon since we could produce millions of gallons of renewable fuels right here, and the state is already on its way to being a hub for electric-vehicle manufacturing and distribution. In fact, Oregon is one of only five states selected to participate in a \$98 million federal grant to roll out electric-car recharging stations. Our leadership is paying off!

### The Case for Efficiency

The energy efficiency sector provides the cheapest, fastest and cleanest way to meet our energy demands and is a

**“Jobs in Oregon’s clean energy economy grew 6.5 times faster than overall jobs.”**

powerful tool to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Efficiency programs in the state have already stimulated a \$76 million net increase in wages and \$11 million in new business income since 2002—and there’s more work to be done. By directing the market to build new buildings as efficiently as possible and by creating incentives for existing buildings to retrofit, Oregon can save ratepayers, consumers and businesses in the state money and create thousands of good jobs for Oregonians.

Clean, green jobs are a clear win for Oregonians’ health and wellbeing, our state’s economy, and the environment.

## Green Jobs in Action

In 2008, my general contracting business was hurt by the economy—my crew, who are like family to me, went from working overtime to barely 25 hours a week. I soon had to lay off half of them. But I noticed people talking about energy efficiency, especially as gas prices sky-rocketed. I thought it could be a great opportunity, so I got certified to do home-efficiency assessments and, with a partner, launched Home Energy & Life Performance Group, Inc. (HELP), a home-performance contracting firm with full weatherization services.

In less than a year, HELP has grown to a team of 12 tackling everything from home assessments to the installation of insulation, high-efficiency equipment and windows. As a Latina woman in construction, it can be hard to compete with the big guys. Luckily, I have been involved with Clean Energy Works Portland, an organization that works with local small business contractors to weatherize and retrofit homes here. Today, HELP is retrofitting up to 15 homes a month. I am able to provide 12 good-wage jobs, plus full health insurance for my employees and their dependents. We also have plans to expand into Astoria.

—Berenice Lopez-Dorsey, President, Home Energy & Life Performance Group, Inc.



Berenice Lopez-Dorsey working with employee Javier Hilario running a Blower Door to test the air leakage in a Portland-area home.

## Jobs By the Numbers

**51,000**

The number of Oregonians working in green jobs—about the same number working in Oregon hospitals

**1,000**

The number of green jobs created by SolarWorld since it opened up shop in Hillsboro in October 2008

**\$22.61**

The average hourly wage for a green job in 2008

**292**

The number of jobs ZeaChem’s biorefinery in Boardman will create—more than half of which will be located in Morrow County

# Operation Greenback

Oregon's largest agricultural sector is showing that eco-friendly practices can boost the bottom line

By Allison Hensey

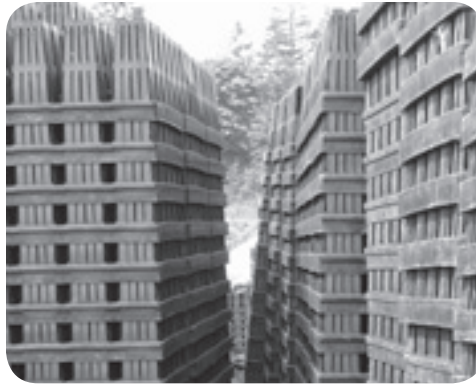
Nurseries are the original green industry—they provide trees and plants that shade our streets, beautify our gardens, restore our riverbanks, clean our water and provide habitat for insects and wildlife. Nurseries in the Climate Friendly Nurseries (CFN) project are adding another kind of green credibility to the industry by showing that earth-friendly practices can boost the bottom line.

CFN is a partnership between OEC and the Oregon Association of Nurseries to demonstrate how nurseries can increase operational efficiency and reduce greenhouse gases (GHG). Ecos Consulting and Oregon State University provide key technical expertise to the effort.

In a bad economy, when sales are down, businesses are looking for ways to cut operating costs. Increasing efficiencies and reducing waste is a great way to do just that—and it can benefit our environment by lowering GHG emissions from energy, fuel, fertilizer and plastics, and by protecting valuable water resources.

Through CFN, a group of Oregon nurseries are systematically tracking their energy and resource use through a GHG

Inventory Calculator. This enables them to identify GHG emissions sources, as well as the highest costs for energy and resources in their operation. Combined with an energy audit and a Best Man-



Stacks of recycled plastic containers used at Heritage Seedlings nursery.

agement Practices Guide, participating nurseries can identify opportunities to make their operations more efficient in ways that will reduce both operating costs and GHG emissions. This kind of tracking over time will also allow them to judge which kinds of improvements offer the most GHG and cost savings.

Many of the participating nurseries are already leaders in efficiency. J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co. (JFS) installed underground drip irrigation at its Canby farm, saving water and enabling them to use drip fertigation to deliver nutrients straight to the plant's roots. "We were paying a lot of overtime for workers to move irrigation pipe, and finding a way to mitigate this rising expense was a key priority" said Sam Doane, JFS Production Horticulturist. With these changes, JFS now uses 30% less fertilizer and water—and less labor to irrigate crops.

Heritage Seedlings significantly reduced waste and costs at its two Marion County farms by cleaning and re-using plastic containers and soil instead of buying them new. This process means there are less weed seeds in the next planting, so Heritage's employees spend less time weeding, freeing them up to propagate plants and fill customer orders.

Both projects paid off in less than two years. Every year after that is pure savings, which can help the bottom line as much as increasing sales.

Go to [climatefriendlynurseries.org](http://climatefriendlynurseries.org).

## Oregon Wineries Set the Example

Before our work with nurseries, there was the Carbon Neutral Challenge (CNC), a program led by OEC and the Oregon Wine Board to systematically reduce GHG emissions in the wine industry since grapes are particularly threatened by climate change. In April, 14 Oregon wineries—representing 20% of the state's overall wine production—completed the challenge. Left Coast Cellars, for example, installed solar and gas meters to reduce its GHG emissions. Its solar panels now provide all the electricity required to irrigate and landscape the vineyard and to electrify the guest cottage, front gate, and more than 60% of the winery and tasting room, saving the winery more than \$10,000 a year. Measuring fuel has also enabled Left Coast to reduce fuel consumption—and save more than \$3,000 in less than nine months. For more info about CNC, go to [cncwine.org](http://cncwine.org).



# Opportunity Knocks

## Green product design gives Oregon businesses a competitive advantage

By Colin Price

Chemicals are part of our daily lives: They're in the clothes we wear, the food we eat, and the products we use (not to mention the processes involved in making all of that!). But the growing recognition that toxic chemicals are a threat to public health and productivity, as well as our economy and our environment, is changing the way chemicals are regulated in the U.S. and internationally.

This need for more sustainable products has opened up a new realm of opportunities for Oregon businesses in the form of green product design and innovation through green chemistry. That's because making products and processes that are safer for people and the environment, more efficient, and made from renewable raw materials creates significant competitive advantages for companies. And as the global demand for high-quality products that embody the pinnacle of environmental performance continues to grow, it will translate into profits for the companies that embrace green manufacturing and be a boon to Oregon's economy.

Oregon is in a strong position to take the lead in green product design because of our unique people, organiza-

tions and natural resources. We have renowned sustainability researchers and educators in the university system, including chemists and engineers. We also have pioneering leaders and companies

that recognize sustainability is a key to success and are already using green product design to overcome some of the toughest sustainability-related challenges. Finally, we are incredibly fortunate to have abundant natural resources that can be used as renewable raw materials.

But Oregon needs to do more to realize its leadership in green manufacturing. We've already seen how nurturing public-private partnerships helps encourage innovation, spur entrepreneurial activity, and maximize our

competitiveness in green building and renewable energy. Investing in green product design makes sense for Oregon businesses because chemicals and chemical products are part of every supply chain, creating endless opportunities to innovate in this field.

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Join us for our **Growing Green Chemistry in Oregon** event on October 13, 7:30 AM – 9:30 AM, in Portland. For more info and to register go to [oeconline.org](http://oeconline.org).

### Leading the Way

#### Nike Athletics Footwear and Apparel



Created an environmentally-friendly rubber and less toxic adhesive for use in shoes that are high-performance and cost-effective.

#### Blount Equipment Manufacturer



Invested in a new metal-cleaning process that dramatically reduced its hazardous waste stream, lowering costs and creating a safer work environment for employees.

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# Working for Justice

An innovative program improves social equity and justice through green jobs

By Teresa Huntsinger

Low-income people and people of color have typically been hit hardest by environmental degradation. They often live closer to high-polluting freeways and industry, farther from natural areas, and their voices are not often heard by policy-makers. Green jobs offer the potential to increase social equity and

scope maintenance work right away with good supervision, and then move up to more complex projects like invasive removal that require plant ID knowledge. We just launched Verde Energy, a weatherization contractor that requires a four-week training program, providing technician training, safety and environ-

Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization—in environmental policy-making. That’s because engaging the green economy has become funda-  
.....

**“Organizations of color understand that engaging the green economy is fundamental to meeting their mission.”**  
.....

mental to meeting their missions. They recognize that environmental restoration means jobs and economic opportunity for people of color. We are developing strong coalitions to work with policy-makers to ensure that when you incent the creation of green roofs or weatherize thousands of homes, you also focus on who is getting the jobs. I mean, justice costs money. It’s really exciting. It’s starting to happen.

**How can environmental organizations help ensure that green jobs promote social justice and equity?**

Environmental groups, collectively, are a significant player in the economy. The bulk of their expenses may be internal, but they also put a lot of money out the door in subcontractors, technical assistance, materials and supplies. Those dollars will either be spent in a way that’s mindful of justice and opportunity, or they will not. Look at your contracting policies. Do you simply work with the same contractors you’ve always worked with? Do you have policies in place that seek out minority-owned businesses? Verde is happy to have a dialogue about changing procurement practices and working with new contractors.



justice—the third “E” of sustainability’s triple bottom line—by reducing these disparities through recruitment and training programs that ensure disadvantaged workers have access to job opportunities and the chance to acquire the skills needed for them. Verde works to make sure this happens with environmental projects in Oregon. [Alan Hipólito](#), the executive director, talked to us about green jobs and environmental justice.

## What training do Verde crew members receive?

All of our regular crew members get on-the-job training and classroom education. Verde Landscape’s entry-level work doesn’t require a lot of training—you just need to be physically able and have a desire to learn. You can start doing land-

mental awareness, and an introduction to residential construction. We work with organizations, like Native American Youth and Family Center and Hacienda CDC, to recruit applicants we hire.

## Where do you see opportunities for Verde’s future growth?

Opportunities in the green economy for low-income people and people of color are exponentially greater than we could ever provide at Verde. However, green job markets don’t prioritize the participation of these communities. The broader impact we want to have is at the policy-making level. Over the last 12 to 18 months, we have seen new and expanded levels of engagement by organizations of color—including Urban League, Programa Hispana, and

# The Power of Your Purse

How you shop really does make a difference

By Jen Coleman

What's hot in the business world right now? Savings, family, and the environment. Any company paying attention to polls hears a resounding message: Consumers want safe, efficient and environmentally sound products—and they won't settle for “greenwashing.”

## The Customer's Always Right

Consumer demand is the top driver of environmental strategy for about 35% of big companies in a recent Greenbiz survey. Even Wal-Mart, which for years was criticized for its corporate stewardship, now recognizes that customers shop with the health of their family and the environment in mind. As the company's CEO Mike Duke put it in the *MIT Sloan Management Review*, customers want “information about the entire life cycle of a product.” And with environmental ratings, label debunkers and toxic detectors available at the touch of an iPhone, it is easier than ever to make informed decisions in the shopping aisle.

Despite an increasingly vocal desire to

buy green, the actual number of dollars spent on those products are a tiny fraction of the overall market. Organic food sales, for example, have experienced an impressive growth of nearly \$24 billion in the last 10 years—but that still accounts for less than 4% of all U.S. food sales. And while General Electric's new energy-efficient line and Clorox's less-toxic products are earning profits beyond expectations, the revenue for these “green” products are only 10% of GE's total revenue and an even smaller fraction of Clorox's.

## Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is

If we are to make green products the norm rather than the niche, green media expert Joel Makower believes that we shoppers must put our wallets behind our values more often. That means looking at more than the actual product to include issues like packaging and the domino affect of your choices. When Wal-Mart created a slightly smaller package for one of their toys, for example, the company preserved thousands

of trees and barrels of oil—and \$2.4 million in trucking costs. Do you miss the plastic tops of Stonyfield yogurt? The virgin plastic in Aveda shampoo bottles? What about the massive jugs of less-concentrated laundry detergent? These small changes may not be noticeable, but they've cut millions of pounds of plastic, saved millions of gallons of water, and shaved millions of dollars off shipping and production costs.

## It Takes a Village

Here at OEC, we're doing our part to make greener products available throughout Oregon. We are working with companies across the state on ways to save money and resources, and we're speaking up for policies that will reward clean and efficient business. But we can't do it alone. Every time you open your pocketbook to pay for greener, more efficient products and services, you make a strong statement to businesses and policy-makers—and you help chart a course for a more efficient, sustainable future.

## Shoppers' Little Helpers

To make informed choices, go to:

- **goodguide.com** for environmental ratings
- **eco-labels.org** to make sure the product labels are true
- **healthystuff.org** & **safecosmetics.org** to find out toxicity of products

## How to Wield Your Personal Power

When you buy environmentally preferable products, you tell the business world that you want “efficient and healthy” to be the rule—not the exception. A few things you can do to amplify your voice through your purchases are:

- **Choose recycled goods and packaging.** “Post-consumer” content means the material is not manufacturing scrap; it has been used once in a product, and your re-use completes the recycling circle.
- **Look for ingredients on cleaning supplies.** Most don't list them, which can mean they're hiding toxic chemicals that pose a health risk. Buy those that tell you what they're made of (and aren't toxic!).
- **Buy products that use less packaging and avoid single-use items.** This will help cut down on the durable materials that make up more than half of the typical household's garbage.



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## Living Green

### Reduce, Recover, and Recycle!

The average family throws out more than 20% of the food it buys, wasting a lot of edibles, a lot of money and a lot of greenhouse gas emissions (landfills are the nation's largest emitter of methane). What can you do? **Turn your food waste into healthy garden soil by composting.** For more info about how it works go to: [deq.state.or.us/lq/sw/compost/](http://deq.state.or.us/lq/sw/compost/).

### Handle Your Meds With Care

Drugs were found in 80% of the samples in a study of 139 streams in 30 states—and they are harming wildlife and may impact our health. Flushing your meds down the toilet means they will end up polluting our rivers. **Throw them in the garbage or take them to a drug take back event instead.** On September 25, dozens of communities around Oregon will host events where you drop off any prescription or over-the-counter drugs. Find out more at [oeconline.org/dtb](http://oeconline.org/dtb).

### Shield the Rain Safely

A colorful slicker and rain boots can brighten up a grey day, especially if they don't contain toxic, smelly PVC plastic.

**Next time you're in the market for rain gear, look for nylon or polyester umbrellas, rubber rain boots, and EVA or PU fabric as safer alternatives to PVC.** Other options: Wool and tight-woven cotton canvas will repel water naturally.

### Join the Green Power Challenge

Be one of 1,000 new Portland households or businesses to **choose renewable energy by September 30, and you'll be part of the growing movement to create a clean and secure energy future for Oregon.** It costs as little as \$1.95. Added bonus: As part of the challenge, each person who signs up can nominate OEC, and we'll receive \$25 from your power company, no strings attached. All PGE and Pacific Power customers can join. For more info, go to [greenpoweroregon.com](http://greenpoweroregon.com).

### Upcoming Events

**Taste Your Oregon @ Bamboo Sushi**  
*Tuesday, October 12, Portland*  
Get a bite! Bamboo Sushi will donate 100% of that night's proceeds to OEC.

**Cutting Carbs Workshop**  
*Friday, November 12, Bend*

For more event info, go to [oeconline.org](http://oeconline.org).

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