



NEWS RELEASE

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For more information, contact:

Jim Morris, DESE, 573-751-3469

Mary Bruton, MERIC, 573-751-3635

Jeremy Kintzel, MDHE, 573-751-2361

Michael Waltman, DWD, 573-526-8267

David Lankford, MCC, 573-634-3511

Missouri to Identify Skills for "Green" Jobs

A \$1.2 million federal stimulus grant is providing Missouri students, jobseekers and employers new resources for taking advantage of the "greening" of the economy.

The grant, awarded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, will fund research to identify opportunities related to "green" occupations, as well as the skills needed for these jobs.

"National labor data has shown 'green' is a category with a lot of new and emerging career opportunities," said Dr. Marty Romitti, director of the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC). "Missouri is preparing for these jobs of tomorrow by separating green jobs out for special analysis. Our statewide workforce agencies will use the information gathered with this grant to create and implement effective workforce development strategies so Missouri workers will be prepared to fill these next-generation, green jobs."

Missouri defines "green jobs" as jobs directly involved in generating or supporting a firm's green-related products or services. Examples of specific occupations with "green" potential include farmers, engineers, environmental compliance inspectors, biologists, construction managers, among others. There will be new jobs, as well as several existing jobs that will transition to "green."

Mary Bruton, a research analyst for the Missouri Department of Economic Development and the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center, likened what is happening with green jobs to the past explosion in information technology, or IT.

"There isn't just an IT industry; a lot of or most jobs require some IT knowledge," she said. "That's the same trend we're seeing with green. There are going to be some green-specific jobs and, more importantly, most jobs in the future will require some green skill sets."

Determining just what those green skills are will be a big part of the research conducted with the \$1,227,192 Missouri State Labor Market Information Improvement Grant. MERIC released a foundational report earlier this month, "The Missouri Green Jobs Report," that explores how a growing interest in green might affect Missouri workers. For example, welders might need to learn new skills to work on wind turbines, industries such as mining might experience job losses and new jobs might be created related to greener waste management.

"Already, green jobs make up 4.8 percent of total employment in Missouri," Bruton said. "With the increasing emphasis being placed on responsible use of natural resources and caring for the environment, it's only reasonable to expect that percentage to grow."

With this grant, we want to identify how students and jobseekers can best take advantage of the new opportunities a green economy will bring.”

The state agencies teaming up to complete the research and deliver resources to the public include the Missouri Department of Economic Development, the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC), Regional Workforce Investment Boards, the State Workforce Investment Board and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. The 18-month grant, which began December 1, will generate resources spaced throughout the time period.

A sampling of the planned resources include statewide and regional green growth reports, which will provide localized analysis of green industries and job trends; a green competency model, which will spell out the skills and competencies needed for green occupations; and a green pathways career guide, which will present a step-by-step guide to securing green careers with assessments, skill lists and training information.

For more information on the grant and planned deliverables, visit www.ded.mo.gov. To view The Missouri Green Jobs Report, go to MERIC's Web site, www.missourieconomy.org, and click on the “Occupational Studies” tab.

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More information is available at http://dese.mo.gov/divcareered/missouri_connections_news_room.htm.

The Missouri Connections Public Outreach Partnership workgroup represents a collaboration of state agencies concerned with education and workforce development who are helping inform and build awareness among the public, particularly students and potential students, of targeted careers, educational and industry trends, and workforce development priorities. Workgroup members represent the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; Department of Higher Education; Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development and Missouri Economic Research & Information Center; Missouri Center for Career Education; and Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Freelance writer is Anita Neal Harrison.