

FOCUS ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ■

Energy Department creates jobs strategy council

WASHINGTON (JR) - An initiative focused on accelerating job growth in American-made clean energy sources was announced Friday by Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz.

Creation of the Jobs Strategy Council was announced during a roundtable with the business leaders of Energy Intensive, Trade Exposed industries and their unions, the United Steelworkers, the United Autoworkers, the Machinists, the IUE-CWA, and the AFL-CIO.

The council will integrate the research, technical and economic resources of the Energy Department to respond to the workforce and economic development needs of the energy industry.

"The energy sector has created tens of thousands of good-paying jobs that lay the foundation for long-term careers and provide a major opportunity for social mobility in disadvantaged communities," Moniz said. "Technological advances in oil and gas extraction, the doubling of renewable energy production in five years, and steady growth in energy efficiency are instrumental for America's economic recovery and will continue to be imperative to supporting innovation for our 21st-century energy system."

Continued growth in energy production is expected to produce 24 million STEM jobs in the next three years. According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, the jobs created in STEM



U.S. Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz answers questions at an energy conference in Houston. AP PHOTO

fields paid, on average, between 160 to more than 300 percent more than the U.S. average.

This growth can be seen across the energy sector, Moniz said.

- **Solar:** According to the Solar Foundation, as of 2014, there were nearly 174,000 jobs in the solar industry. That represents 86-percent employment growth since 2010.

- **Manufacturing:** After a decade of

decline, American manufacturing is coming back, adding 786,000 new jobs since February 2010.

- **Wind:** According to the American Wind Energy Association, an estimated 85,000 Americans are currently employed in the wind power industry and related fields.

- **Oil and Gas:** As reported by the Energy Information Administration, between 2003 and 2012, employment in

the oil and gas industry increased by 155 percent.

Increased demand for STEM jobs and an aging energy workforce throughout many energy sectors has created a skills gap that the Jobs Strategy Council will work to address through partnerships with the private sector, community college systems, union apprenticeship programs, and other educational institutions, building upon the groundwork set forth in President Barack Obama's Ready to Work job training strategy.

The council will also assist the private sector, municipalities and states with the development of a resource tool kit and workshop materials that instruct states on how to access the department's technical knowledge and funding opportunities to create state-based energy jobs plans.

Working with industry partners and other federal agencies, the council will develop a methodology for providing consistent, usable data measuring energy job growth to take advantage of economic opportunities and more clearly align workforce development systems with energy industry skills' needs.

The council includes members from 20 offices within the Department of Energy, including representatives from the Department's National Laboratories. It will also work directly on partnerships with the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, Defense, Commerce, Agriculture, and Veterans Affairs. The secretary of energy is chairman of the council.

Autry starts skills gap awareness efforts

ENID (JR) - Northwest Oklahoma is currently affected by a skills gap, said Jim Strate, superintendent of Autry Technology Center in Enid.

This month Autry Technology Center released the first video in a new series as part of its efforts to increase awareness of the skills gap problem. The video is posted on Autry's website at autrytech.edu and on its Facebook page.

The first installation introduces different perspectives from community members about what the skills gap means to them.

Strate, Aaron Harmon, president of GEFCO; Kyle Hockmeyer, business and industry coordinator at Autry; and Geoffrey Washburn, a former student of

Autry that went on to work for GEFCO, all offer their thoughts on the subject.

"Through our partnerships with local business and industry, our objective is to promote awareness of the local skills gap," Strate said. "As your community workforce resource, we are here to benefit business and industry and the skilled students leaving our programs."

One way Autry helps open up more jobs is by providing the training that will give workers in lower-income jobs the skills to move up, therefore opening up those lower-income jobs for more workers.

"Staffing people is our biggest problem," Harmon said. "In Garfield County there is such a shortage of

skilled workers ... machinists, welders, machine operators, mechanics."

Autry works with 10 schools in Garfield County to provide free training for students.

"What's happening right now is that applicants out in the labor market right now do not have the skills that are necessary for the job," Strate said. "We have to have a partnership with the public schools, starting in elementary school."

Autry serves nearly 13,000 individuals each year, including many area employees who receive training through the Business and Industry Services Department that works with 500 local businesses each year.

Workforce Tulsa, library helping job seekers

TULSA (JR) - Workforce Tulsa and the Tulsa City-County Library have an agreement for job seekers to automatically be registered for a library card providing them access to in-library and digital resources available at all 24 libraries throughout Tulsa County.

"Adding the libraries to our network

of access points is a very natural progression of our partnership and provides tremendous resources for those looking for a new job," said Shelley Cadamy, executive director, Workforce Tulsa.

Workforce Tulsa offers services and resources to people who are entering the job market for the first time who

want to improve work-related skills, were incarcerated and now seek job training and employment and are interested in learning about different and new career options.

Librarians with the Tulsa City-County Library have created a one-stop location at guides.tulsalibrary.org/jobs

for job help. This section features library and community services available to help job seekers increase their marketability.

The library has books to help people seeking employment become a better job candidate. The library also has computers for use by the job seekers.

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