

More Renewable Energy Could Boost Economy



Mayor Chris Boswell, Dr. Cesar Maldonado, Bill Hamilton and Bill Martin

Harlingen, TX, August 26, 2010 -- Increased development of the renewable energy industry in Texas could dramatically improve the state's economy during the next 10 years, according to a new report.

Job gains would jump to 22,900 per year, the Texas gross state product would increase by \$2.7 billion per year, and state and local tax revenues would increase by \$279 million per year if wind energy production increases at the same growth rate experienced from 2004-

2009, according to the report titled "The Texas Clean Energy Economy: Where we are. Where we're going. What we need to succeed." Billy C. Hamilton, former Texas chief deputy comptroller, prepared the report for The Cynthia and George Mitchell Foundation, which is dedicated to enhancing Texans' quality life through artistic and scientific creativity.

The full report is featured on the home Web page for the Texas Economic Development Council at www.texasedc.org. Hamilton was among four speakers to address the research and its implications at a news briefing August 25 in the TSTC Cultural Arts Center. Harlingen Mayor Chris Boswell and Harlingen Economic Corporation CEO William Martin commented about business development opportunities for green energy, and TSTC Harlingen President Dr. Cesar Maldonado summarized the expansion of renewable energy technology programs under way on campus.

"If there is one thing Texas has it is open space, sun and wind," Hamilton said. "We have all the components for a clean energy economy right here."

According to the 120-page report, the investment equivalent of \$4 per month in a 10-year period for each Texas family would spur the state's renewable energy industry to create 229,000 jobs and \$27 billion in local and state tax revenue. Hamilton outlined three potential growth levels – low, medium and high – for renewable energy in Texas. The low level would produce the existing 8.6 percent of the state's electricity through clean sources and the high level would increase renewable energy sources to 20 percent of the state's total energy output, roughly the same goal set by California.

The advancement of renewable energy will promote U.S. energy independence and reduce environmental damage caused by pollution. The report noted that market factors such as fluctuations in oil prices, changing government regulations, tax-related incentives for companies, new energy storage technology, improvements to energy distribution systems, and private funding for research could alter the report's predictions.

Martin also serves as chairman of the Rio South Texas Council, a consortium of 22 cities, counties and economic development entities on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. He said that the council has attracted some renewable energy firms to the border region. A combined population of 2.3 million people on both sides of the Rio Grande makes it the 23rd largest metropolitan area in the United States.

"I am optimistic, based on talks with industry officials, that we can develop our area as a renewable energy center similar in many ways to Corpus Christi," Martin said.

Dr. Maldonado said that TSTC and Del Mar Community College in Corpus Christi are cooperating with companies on a project to enhance training for students who will enter the green energy work force. The college recently obtained rights to remodel the former United Launch Alliance warehouse on Valley International Airport property to house its South Texas Renewable Energy Institute in the revamped facility, along with some existing technology programs.

"Green energy is here to stay in Texas and TSTC is going to be in the arena," he concluded.

For More Information contact:

Dave Ralph, Communications Writer
Marketing Department
Texas State Technical College
1902 North Loop 499 | Harlingen, TX | 78550-3653



956.364.4113 office | 956.357.4641 cell | 956.364.5105 fax