



Posted on Fri, Jun. 12, 2009

Clean energy expands in S.C.

Report says state's growth rate topped nation's between 1998 and 2007

By NOELLE PHILLIPS
nophillips@thestate.com

South Carolina is growing its clean energy economy faster than the U.S. average, a national study found.

In 2007, the state had 11,255 clean energy jobs and 884 clean energy businesses. It showed a 36.2 percent growth rate during a 10-year period, the Pew Charitable Trusts said in its new report, "The Clean Energy Economy: Repowering Jobs, Business and Investments Across America."

Nationally, the clean energy economy grew 9.1 percent between 1998 and 2007, the report found.

"South Carolina has a small but fast-growing piece of the nation's clean energy economy," said Heyward Bannister, Pew's South Carolina representative.

The report counted jobs in each state that exist because of environmentally friendly businesses and services. It did not include estimates, multipliers or projections.

In South Carolina, those jobs include companies such as Argand Energy Solutions. The company designs and installs solar-powered electric and hot water systems. It employs 15 people.

And the state keeps recruiting new clean energy companies. Earlier this year, Peregrine Energy Corp. of Greenville announced plans for a \$135 million biomass energy plant. It is slated to open in 2012 and would employ 30 full-time workers. The plant will burn byproducts from the logging industry to provide 50 megawatts of electricity for Sonoco's Hartsville plant.

South Carolina's clean energy economy grew at an average annual rate of 3.56 percent, the report said. The clean energy sector's growth rate was 16 times faster than the overall job growth rate, the report said.

Among the report's other findings:

- South Carolina ranked ninth nationally in the fastest-growing percentage of clean energy jobs.
- South Carolina ranked 24th in the nation in the number of clean energy jobs.
- It ranked 25th in the number of clean energy businesses.
- The state ranked 28th in the number of clean technology patent registrations.
- Clean energy jobs made up less than 1 percent of the state's 2 million jobs.
- South Carolina had not attracted venture capital funding for clean energy jobs.
- South Carolina offers financial incentives to drive the clean energy economy.
- The state does not participate in regional initiatives such as multistate agreements to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.
- South Carolina does not require electricity providers to provide a minimum percentage of customer power from renewable resources.

Reach Phillips at **(803) 771-8307**

More green jobs

South Carolina has one of the fastest growing clean energy industries in the country. A clean energy job could be anything from someone who installs solar panels to the president of a biomass plant. Since 2006, the S.C. Department of Commerce has recruited 15 companies that provide clean energy jobs. They are:

MIDLANDS

Company: Farmers & Truckers Biodiesel

County: Aiken

Investment: \$1.4 million

Jobs: 60

Product description: Biodiesel

Company: Rollcast Energy Inc.

County: Newberry

Investment: \$170 million

Jobs: 27

Product description: Biomass

Company: Parsons Corp.

County: Aiken

Investment: \$7.4 million

Jobs: 160

Product description: U.S. Department of Energy testing and training

Company: Trulite Inc.

County: Richland

Investment: \$1.5 million

Jobs: 9

Product description: Fuel cells

UPSTATE

Company: 3M

County: Greenville

Investment: \$100 million

Jobs: 50

Product description: Biodiesel

Company: Greenlight Biofuels

County: Laurens

Investment: \$10 million

Jobs: 15

Product description: Biodiesel fuels

Company: Crescent Biodiesel

County: Anderson

Investment: \$5 million

Jobs: 30

Product description: Biodiesel fuels

Company: Osage Bio Energy

County: Union

Investment: \$161.5 million

Jobs: 75

Product description: Barley-based ethanol

Company: Lincoln Energy Solutions

County: Anderson

Investment: \$12 million

Jobs: 6

Product description: Blended fuel (gas and ethanol)

Company: OP Carolinas

County: Cherokee

Investment: \$9 million

Jobs: 5

Product description: Ethanol distribution center

LOWCOUNTRY

Company: Delfin Group USA

County: Charleston

Investment: \$20 million

Jobs: 170

Product description: Oil packaging and distribution

Company: Delfin Group USA (expansion)

County: Charleston

Investment: \$55 million

Jobs: 160

Product description: Petroleum products

Company: Renewed World Energies

County: Georgetown

Investment: \$29.3 million

Jobs: 60

Product description: Algae oil

Company: Coastal Biodiesel Group

County: Horry

Investment: \$4.5 million

Jobs: 50

Product description: Biodiesel fuel using restaurant grease

PEE DEE

Company: Peregrine Energy Corp.

County: Darlington

Investment: \$130 million

Jobs: 150

Product description: Biomass fuel

© 2009 TheState.com and wire service sources. All Rights Reserved. <http://www.thestate.com>