

Alternative Energy = Jobs

Written by Russ Handler

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Expert Reveals How Alternative Energy Will Put Americans Back to Work

The old jobs are dead. Long live the new jobs.

That's the message **Tom Rand** sees in the current news cycle as Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke announced in January that unemployment rates would take four to five years to get back to "normal." In the meantime, several states announced that alternative energy jobs were soaring.

"In America, we used to make things," said Rand, a new millennium combination of scientist and venture capitalist who believes the country's future hinges on the development and ownership of alternative energy technology. "We built cars, homes and other manufactured goods that we'd use here and export abroad. As our quality of life was raised, other countries used their lower economic classes to make up a new generation of cheap labor aimed at undercutting American made goods. Today, we have millions of manufacturing workers who have been displaced and are unable to find work. In the meantime, our dependence on fossil fuels continues to make Americans slaves to foreign oil. Alternative energy is the industry that can break that chain in a variety of ways."

Rand, author of the book **KICK the Fossil Fuel Habit: 10 Clean Technologies to Save Our World** from Greenleaf Book Group Press (www.tomrand.com), said

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he is already seeing an explosion of new jobs in the alternative energy sector.

“A Colorado solar energy company is expected to create 1,200 new jobs within the next couple of years thanks to a \$400 million loan guaranteed through the US department of energy and another \$110 million in equity financing,” said Rand. “The best thing about it is the company, Abound Solar, won’t require the new hires to have experience in alternative energy. Because the jobs are manufacturing oriented, the typical skills learned in traditional manufacturing jobs are transferrable to the new initiative. And it’s not just manufacturing, these technologies need to be installed. We’re rebuilding an energy infrastructure, and that takes the trades – all the trades and lots of them.”

Rand added that the wind power industry also received a big boost from the government with the renewing of a key tax credit, which is hoped to increase wind project installations by about 50 percent. That’s just one part of the equation, though.

“A national Renewable Electricity Standard (RES) policy was before Congress last year, but it didn’t pass,” Rand added. “If Congress succeeds in passing it this year, it would solidify the wind energy market enough that it could create several hundred thousand jobs as a result. Meanwhile in Florida, the renewable energy industry is hoping the legislature will pass a \$1 consumer fee that would generate 95,000 new alternative energy jobs in that state. The bottom line is that the new energy jobs aren’t a myth -- they are out there, and not only can they put America back to work, but they can also secure our energy independence for generations to come. It’s just smart business for America.”