



ENERGY WORKFORCE SECTOR STRATEGY

Energy Workforce Sector Strategy (EWSS) Central Valley Regional Industry Forum - Modesto July 10, 2013

Co-hosted by PG&E and The Stanislaus Alliance Worknet

Meeting Minutes

PARTICIPANTS

In Person:

Natalie Culver-Dockins, Fresno City College
Walter Kim, ConSol
Jeff Rowe, Stanislaus Alliance Worknet
Jim Caldwell, Workforce Incubator
J.D. Stack, Workforce Incubator

By Phone/Webinar:

Vlada Alsaski, Matrix Energy Services, Inc.
David Casentini, Resource Solutions Group
Erik Helling, Matrix Energy Services, Inc.
Sally Martin, Richard Heath & Associates
Lisa Shell, PG&E
Brad Hurte, Workforce Incubator

PRESENTATIONS

- Lisa Shell opened the meeting. She described PG&E's Energy Workforce Sector Strategy (EWSS) project and pointed to policies that are driving energy efficiency (EE) adoption.
- Jeff Rowe also welcomed participants and described workforce programs of The Stanislaus Alliance.
- Jim Caldwell then presented an overview of the Energy Workforce Sector Strategy (EWSS) project. This included:
 - Energy efficiency market drivers
 - EWSS research process
 - Long-term and near-term employment outlook
 - Distribution of job openings by region
 - Survey of education and training programs pertinent to energy efficiency
 - Current and planned portfolio of energy efficiency training programs



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- Then Brad Hurte walked participants through a live demonstration of the EWSS web portal. This focused specifically on the employer resources section of the portal and its linkages to various college and university programs relating to energy efficiency. He asked for feedback and suggestions for improving the portal content.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Key Points:

1. Jeff Rowe pointed out that many of the EE occupations might apply to the California High Speed Rail Project, which could create a scarcity of EE workers in the Central Valley. Jim Caldwell added that the Monterey Shale exploration effort might also create worker scarcity.
2. David Casentini said his firm needs installers and project managers, but he is not sure how to draw the line there from trade schools.
3. Walter Kim said that about six months of OJT on EE work is typically needed to bring a new hire up to the skills level required on the job. He added that, “When we can aggregate skill sets at the technical and engineering levels, then we have a workforce”.
4. Natalie Culver-Dockins questioned whether perceived gaps are all real or some due to different terminology among employers, educators, etc.
5. David Casentini said he was impressed with the web portal and will recommend it to his firm’s HR people.
6. Sally Martin said her firm sees a need to overlap technical and professional skill sets, especially when dealing with small business clients. She sees sales skills and professional services skills intersecting. She suggested offering new courses to round out these skills. Jim Caldwell then described various new courses that are rolling out this year.
7. Sally suggested that more hours of training are needed on how to engage and enroll customers. She also said deeper EE skills depth is needed to address Title-24, lighting controls, HVAC, and refrigeration. She added that lighting controls crosses over multiple skill sets.
8. David Casentini echoed Sally on the point that we need to prepare people to do deeper retrofits, building commissioning, operational changes, and on new technologies, which may take specialized training.
9. He advocated for preparing solid project managers that can speak to the benefits of EE in terms of quantitative and qualitative terms. “There is definitely a skills gap to speak ROI with CFOs.”
10. Walter Kim suggested that the financial drivers table be combined with regional priorities (e.g., business development and technical people). He added that auditing is not the same as benchmarking and that we must separate residential from commercial skills.
11. He emphasized that upselling skills are a huge gap because most EE people come up through technical training and experience. He said that speaking to a CFO or plant manager is an enormous challenge for them.
12. Walter also pointed out that PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) programs are taking an aggregated whole building approach, and therefore, will require a deep retrofit mentality.



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Discussion Outcomes:

1. Jim asked participants if they would be willing to sit in a room or on a conference call with educators to explain these gaps. Walter said he would, but he suggested we use specific examples of gaps (e.g., for a \$5 million contract or for going door-to-door for small business clients). David and Sally also agreed to join in such a discussion.
2. Title-24 upgrades and PACE programs will require more people with deep EE skills.
3. Repeatedly, we heard that workers need to be better prepared to effectively articulate EE benefits to customers and to up sell them to adopt more EE measures.

Next Steps:

1. Conduct a session in which industry people explain training gaps to educators (see item 1 above).
2. David Casentini suggested we get representation from the trades (e.g., refrigeration companies, lighting companies, PG&E rebate vendors and trade allies).
3. Sally Martin said we should reach out to PG&E Third Party Partner (3P) firms as well.
4. Walter recommended that Ila Homsher, manager of PG&E's 3P programs, could help promote EW to the 3P firms by possibly setting a mandatory meeting or call. Similarly, PG&E could do require trade ally partners to participate in a call or meeting.
5. Jeff Rowe added that WIBs might help sponsor training, especially for certification programs.

Minutes prepared by JD Stack.

Corrections can be sent to JD@EmpowerAdvisors.com.