



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Centers of Excellence Report Identifies Eight High-Growth Occupations in Orange County *More than 3,000 energy efficiency jobs to be added within three years*

(Santa Ana)—As state job losses continue to climb, the Center of Excellence Orange County Region, has released a [report](#) that identifies energy efficiency jobs as an employment sector with a very positive outlook.

“Based on a 2009 survey of Orange County businesses and industries that employ energy efficiency workers,” said Kari Caldwell, director of OC Center of Excellence, “as many as 3,130 new jobs will be added to our local workforce over the next three years in eight high-demand occupations.”

In 2009, the Centers of Excellence partnered with multiple utilities, including Southern California Edison, Southern California Gas Company, and Pacific Gas and Electric, to survey firms throughout the state that will most likely require the services of employees in the eight energy efficiency occupations featured in this study. This study focuses on the Orange County region with data gleaned from the responses of more than 137 employers countywide.

This industry segment was selected for study due to a number of current forces driving growth:

- The **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009** (ARRA) includes approximately \$30 billion of investments in energy efficiency projects and tax incentives for homeowners.
- **California has moved aggressively** to establish legislation and policy that put energy efficiency center stage in the effort to meet the state’s increasing energy needs and to fight global warming.
- During 2006-08, California’s Investor Owned Utilities (IOUs) launched **the single-largest energy efficiency campaign** in U.S. history, with a \$2 billion investment by California ratepayers for energy efficiency programs. Southern California Edison (SCE) has invested nearly \$800 million during 2006-08 towards energy efficiency programs.
- The Orange County Workforce Investment Board with the Orange County Business Council and the Clean Agency developed a **Green Initiatives Steering Tactics** plan.

The primary research revealed that energy efficiency workers are found in three industry clusters—public or private utilities or agencies, building design and construction, and building or facility operations and maintenance. In Orange County, more than 1,130 firms were identified as employing energy efficiency workers in one or more of the eight occupations studied. The occupations are:

- Project managers for construction or design work;
- HVAC mechanics, technicians or installers;
- Building performance or retrofitting specialists;
- Building controls systems technicians;
- Compliance analyst or energy regulation specialists;
- Resource conservation or energy efficiency managers;

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- Energy auditors or home energy raters; and
- Building operators/engineers.

The **largest growth occupations over the next 12 months** are project managers for construction or design work, and building performance or retrofitting specialists with as many as 220 new jobs projected for each.

The **largest growth occupations over the next three years** continues to be project managers for construction or design work with as many as 990 new jobs projected (an increase of 30 percent), followed by HVAC mechanics, technicians or installers with as many as 580 new jobs projected over the same period (an increase of 28 percent).

“These high-demand jobs pay livable wages ranging from \$37,440 for an entry level HVAC technician to \$80,000 for experienced project managers, resource conservation or energy efficiency managers, and compliance analysts or energy regulation specialists,” said Caldwell.

Some of the report’s most vital data addresses the current challenges for firms in the energy efficiency sector. Finding qualified workers tops the list. Training and certification obstacles, along with education and salary information, are also highlighted. Caldwell said, “Now that we know what businesses need, we need to ensure that our community colleges are on track with developing a workforce with the skills that are most needed.” The study points to three key skill areas: 1) ability to communicate with customers, in writing and in person; 2) understanding of local and state energy efficiency requirements and incentives; and 3) general understanding of the mechanics and engineering of energy systems, including HVAC, lighting and renewable energy systems.

“Knowing about these high-growth occupations is the first step in retraining displaced workers and getting them back into the workforce,” said Caldwell.

For more information about the Energy Efficiency Occupations in Orange County study, contact center director Kari Caldwell at (714) 564-5529. To download the complete report, click through to this [link](#).

About the Center of Excellence

Working with businesses and community colleges to address workforce needs in Orange County, the Center of Excellence (COE) is one of the economic development programs hosted by the Rancho Santiago Community College District. Funded by the California Community College Chancellor’s Office, the COE forges links between the business needs and the career technical education programs offered at Orange County’s nine community colleges.

About the Rancho Santiago Community College District

The mission of the Rancho Santiago Community College District (RSCCD) is to respond to the educational needs of an ever-changing community and to provide programs and services that reflect academic excellence. Santa Ana College and Santiago Canyon College are public community colleges of RSCCD, which serve the residents of Anaheim Hills, East Garden Grove, Irvine, Orange, Santa Ana, Tustin and Villa Park. Both colleges provide education for academic transfer and careers, courses for personal and professional development, customized training for business and industry, and programs to train nurses, firefighters and law enforcement personnel.

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