



NORTH CAROLINA SUSTAINABLE ENERGY ASSOCIATION

Education ♦ Public Policy ♦ Economic Development

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NORTH CAROLINA'S GREEN ENERGY ECONOMY CONTINUES RAPID GROWTH, DESPITE RECESSION

*Firms employ 10,250 workers, maintain a presence in all 100 North Carolina counties
and generate more than \$3.5 billion in annual revenue*

RALEIGH, NC – The North Carolina Sustainable Energy Association (NCSEA) today released the 2009 North Carolina Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Industries Census, which identified 10,250 green energy jobs in all 100 counties of North Carolina. The annual report was released at NCSEA's forum, "*Growing North Carolina's Green Energy Economy: Learning, Connecting & Creating Opportunities Together*," which was held at the Charlotte Convention Center on Friday, October 9 with close to 400 attendees from across the state. Go to www.energync.org/greenjobs to download the 2009 Industries Census or view other recent green jobs reports.

The annual census conducted by NCSEA identifies and surveys firms conducting renewable energy and energy efficiency activities in North Carolina. To participate in the research, firms had to meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Allocate at least 50% of staff time to work related to renewable energy and energy efficiency;
- Generate at least 50% of revenue from work related to renewable energy or energy efficiency; or
- Generate at least \$25,000 in economic gain (revenue, avoided costs, etc.) from work directly related to renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Earlier this summer, NCSEA identified and surveyed 1,136 firms potentially meeting these criteria. The firms largely represented businesses, but several state agencies, education outfits, and non-profits were also included. A total of 548 firms met the qualifications and responded to the census' 23 questions. Another 110 firms indicated they did not meet any of the qualifying criteria.

The 2009 report estimates that the renewable energy and energy efficiency industries employ 10,250 full-time equivalent employees across a broad supply chain in North Carolina. Manufacturers support the greatest percentage of employees – 23% of the reported jobs were with firms that identified manufacturing as most important to their business.

"With 10,250 renewable energy and energy efficiency jobs currently in the industries and significant growth projected, even during these tough economic times, North Carolina is poised to become a national leader in the green energy economy," said Paul Quinlan, NCSEA's Director of Economic Research and Development. "However, our state must take the right steps in next two years in order to capitalize on this opportunity; otherwise, we'll be left behind as other states step up and take the lead."

Despite challenging economic conditions, respondents experienced 6% growth in employment from July 2008 to July 2009. Over the same time period, more than 200,000 jobs – or roughly 5% of the North Carolina workforce – were lost. Firms involved in "manufacturing" and "high performance building and retrofits" experienced net employment loss during this time frame, but all business types anticipate employment growth in the next twelve months.

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“The renewable energy and energy efficiency industries support a diverse spectrum of workers,” said Quinlan. “Manufacturers in North Carolina are a major source of employment, and with the right incentives and state policies, current manufacturing facilities could re-tool, transition, and grow into the sustainable energy industries. This retooling would create even more green jobs, but more importantly, on-going manufacturing layoffs could be prevented and instead this important sector could once again grow.”

It should be noted, NCSEA does not recommend growth rates to be calculated from 2008 and 2009 employment estimates. NCSEA believes the 6,470 jobs reported in the inaugural 2008 census to be conservative following improved identification of potential firms in 2009. Consequently, the conservative baseline estimate inflates the growth rate between 2008 and 2009. Having improved identification techniques in 2009, NCSEA does not anticipate this shortcoming in future reports.

In the 2009 report, NCSEA estimates that renewable energy and energy efficiency industries generate more than \$3.5 billion in annual revenue from North Carolina activities, with the industries maintaining a presence in all 100 North Carolina counties.

Wake County is leading the state’s green energy economy due to its 141 firms reporting a presence. Mecklenburg County ranks second with 99 firms and Buncombe County ranks third with 57 firms. NCSEA defines a “presence” as having a headquarters, satellite office, manufacturing facility, or remotely located employees. The Research Triangle Region supports 36% of the reporting firms’ headquarters.

The renewable energy and energy efficiency industries are largely dependent on North Carolina and U.S. markets. Over 70% of firms report North Carolina as the final destination for the majority of their products and services.

“The policies enacted by North Carolina decision makers have created a more robust market for these products and services and laid a strong foundation for our green energy economy,” concluded Quinlan. “With federal climate change and energy legislation stalling in Washington, sustained employment growth in the North Carolina renewable energy and energy efficiency industries will be dependent on continued growth of the North Carolina market.”

Roughly three-quarters of responding firms consider access to finance and North Carolina’s state regulatory structure as “very important” or “important” to their business.

NCSEA plans to conduct the "North Carolina Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Industries Census" annually in order to track the expansion of these fast growing industries.

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About The North Carolina Sustainable Energy Association – Founded in 1978, The North Carolina Sustainable Energy Association is a 501(c)3 membership organization of individuals, businesses, government and non-profits working to ensure a sustainable future by promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency in NC through education, public policy and economic development. Learn more at www.energync.org.