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Ohio Training for Green Jobs; WV Could Do More

February 1, 2010

CHARLESTON, W.Va. - Ohio ranked number one in the country last year for job creation in the advanced-energy economy, according to the group *Policy Matters Ohio*, with half of all new jobs coming in the fields of solar and wind power. The group's analysis says much of the success is the result of workforce training.

Ted Boettner, executive director of the *West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy*, says Mountaineers could learn from Ohio and other states.

"We could develop a workforce development grant program for universities and technical colleges. Up in Massachusetts, they just created a 'Pathway Out of Poverty' program that provides grants to nonprofits and labor organizations for workforce training."

Amy Hanauer, executive director of *Policy Matters Ohio*, says her state can capitalize on its job creation potential by strengthening its current training infrastructure. Like West Virginia, Ohio business is strong in manufacturing and construction.

"The green economy actually offers this perfect combination of both. It's tapping into historic skills where Ohio has dominated, but it's also giving it a new twist and figuring out how we're going to make our economy more sustainable going forward."

Boettner says another good idea that that some states are funding with stimulus money is local "Cash for Caulkers" programs, paying people to improve the energy efficiency of homes.

"The State of New York has adopted a policy. They're going to make 1 million homes green in the state; it's going to create about 15,000 jobs."

Boettner says there is federal stimulus money available to pay for workforce training.

Dan Heyman, Public News Service - WV

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