

# Green jobs provide new opportunities

Green jobs are in the news a lot these days, but what exactly is a green job?

Millions of dollars in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act money – from the “stimulus bill” – are available for training and retraining employees to apply “green” energy-efficiency principles in their work.

The first and most obvious category of green jobs is in the area of construction. Teaching builders and installers how to weatherize structures, install solar panels and set up geothermal heating and cooling systems is a growing part of the energy efficiency initiative.

Plumbers, electricians, maintenance staff and mechanics can all learn green techniques for better, more efficient use of their building and maintenance applications. Energy auditors are being trained to pinpoint efficiency improvement. And a “smart grid” will help us all – businesses and households – schedule electrical use in a more efficient manner, reducing the energy need or demand away from peak times and ultimately saving money.

Locally, Midwest Energy’s “How Smart” program has garnered much interest using Recovery Act money to offer energy audits that produce efficiency fixes for households in its service area.

Another area of green jobs is in the production of renewable energy, such as wind and biomass projects. The wind energy industry has great promise for Kansas, the third windiest state in the nation. Kansas has eight wind farms in production and more than 50 others in development.

Along with the wind farms, which employ managers, wind energy technicians and construction crews, the component manufac-



**Susan Nickerson**

- Smarter Workplace

turing supply chain that holds potential for Kansas manufacturers who are ready with quality control certifications.

To learn more about wind energy in Kansas and the opportunity to be part of a supply chain for turbine parts and towers, consider attending the Kansas Wind Supply Chain Workshop on Monday, Oct. 5, and the Kansas Wind and Renewable Energy Conference on Tuesday and Wednesday, Oct. 6 and 7, both in Topeka. For details, visit [KansasCommerce.com](http://KansasCommerce.com).

Creating biofuel from agricultural products and waste is also considered a green industry with green jobs. Kansas currently has 11 ethanol and two biodiesel plants in operation. In development are projects that utilize crop waste and various vegetation to produce fuel.

All workers have a green component to their job, whether it’s turning off lights, computers and equipment to save energy or doing one of the more obvious green-related job functions. The greener we all think, the better off our bottom line will be. And in these tough economic times, the more efficiently we can work, the better it is for us all.

*Susan Nickerson, west regional director for the Kansas Department of Commerce, Workforce Development Division, has experience in education, nonprofits, manufacturing, retail and corporate work.*

# Study of wind project gets grant for Atwood

A project near Atwood in Rawlins County by Danken Energy LLC has been selected for a grant of \$38,800 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Development administration.

The money will be combined with an applicant contribution of \$116,400 to complete a feasibility study for a proposed 300-megawatt wind-energy project.

This project was one of 13 chosen to receive a total of \$675,054 in loans and grants to make energy-efficiency improvements and conduct a feasibility study for a renewable energy system. The money comes from the Rural Energy for America Program, established in the 2008 Farm Bill, and is not part of the so-called stimulus act.

# K-State ag management class deadline coming October 30

Friday, Oct. 30, is the deadline to enroll in Kansas State University’s Management, Analysis and Strategic Thinking program for farm and ranch operators, also known as MAST.

The program is designed to enhance management skills and provide new decision-making tools and strategic planning strategies, said coordinator Alicia Goheen. It is based in K-State’s Department of Agricultural Economics.

Past participants have come from a wide range of agricultural backgrounds, including cow-calf producers, diversified crop farmers, land owners and dairy managers – and from across the United States, including Iowa, Missouri, Texas, Virginia, and Minnesota.

The program starts with a two-day on-campus orientation, Monday and Tuesday, Nov. 16-17, where participants meet one another as well as program administrators and faculty. After the ori-

entation, participants return home to work on the course modules on their own time.

The modules, taught by Agricultural Economics faculty, cover such topics as land, machinery, financial analysis, human resources, taxes and public policy, risk management and marketing.

The program will end with a second on-campus visit Feb. 23-24. Class members will provide feedback and participate in a graduation ceremony.

Tuition is \$1,250 per person or \$1,100 per person if two or more participate from the same business. Information is available at [www.agmanager.info/MAST/](http://www.agmanager.info/MAST/) or by contacting Goheen at (785) 532-4434 or [agoheen@agecon.ksu.edu](mailto:agoheen@agecon.ksu.edu).

Farm Credit of Kansas is offering partial scholarships for association members. For information, stop by your Farm Credit Association office or call Goheen.

# 4-H offers new energy project

A new 4-H project focuses on sustainable energy and should be of high interest to Kansans, a Kansas State University spokesperson said.

The project, titled “The Power of the Wind,” is geared toward fifth through eighth graders and explores basic scientific principles related to energy, the environment, and ways in which to harness energy, said Gary Gerhard, Kansas State University professor and 4-H youth development specialist.

“Students choosing the project will learn about different applications of wind as energy,” said Gerhard, who noted that lessons within the project range from studying the aerodynamics of a basic pinwheel to Bernoulli’s Principle and how an airplane can fly.

More technical lessons will focus on adjusting the angle of the

blades in a pinwheel to provide the desired effect.

As with all 4-H programs, age-appropriate educational materials introduce a topic and are followed up with a series of skill-building activities, Gerhard added.

The new project fits within the Science, Engineering and Technology curriculum stressed in 4-H programs, he said.

A move toward science, engineering and technology in 4-H projects has been gradual, and includes robotics, rocketry, global positioning systems (GPS) and space technologies, said Gerhard, who noted that 4-H projects often jumpstart a lifelong interest or the basis of a career.

Information about “The Power of the Wind,” or other Kansas 4-H projects and opportunities is available at [www.kansas4h.org](http://www.kansas4h.org).

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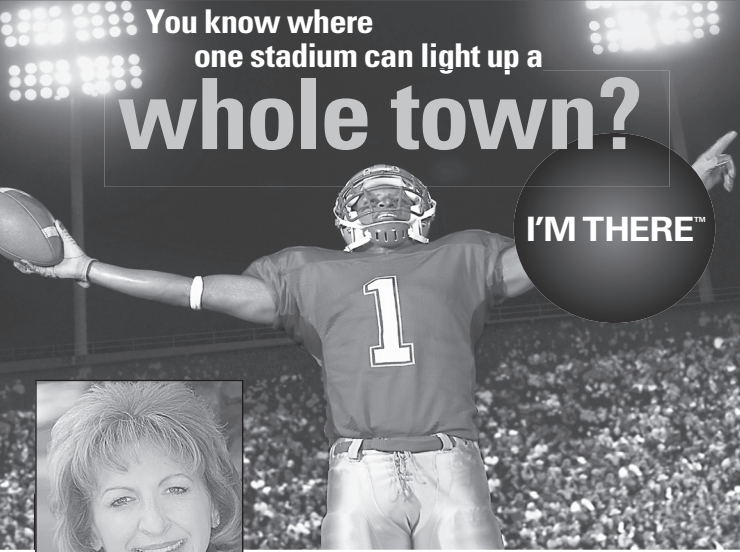
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