

Green jobs for sustainability, growth and recovery

By **Aric Caplan**

Global warming and recession: these are two major American crises for which the solutions are the same. By curbing emissions and investing in green jobs, energy security, and placing “smart growth” at the center of an economic recovery plan, a New Energy Economy can counter the estimated 2.6 million jobs lost in 2008.



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Of course, to achieve a sensible recovery, it's vital that our corporate and political leaders work together to generate “green jobs” in all sectors of the economy. Doing so will create the basis for stable, long term economic growth, increase consumer confidence and effectively start to restore our environment by slowing global warming.

Likewise, we must eliminate dirty

fuels. Outdated polluting technologies, such as coal-fired power plants, off-shore drilling and environmentally destructive practices like mountain-top removal and coal ash dumping, must finally become a thing of the past. America's cities and communities can no longer be asked to tolerate energy models that poison our air and water and spread dangerous metals and toxins into our soil and rivers.

What exactly does a “green job” or “green industry” look like? Recently Caplan Communications had the opportunity to work with Environmental Entrepreneurs, a new generation of business leaders who act passionately about the environment and have built cogent examples to green the American workforce.

Tedd Saunders is the Co-Owner of The Four Diamond Lenox Hotel and Comfort Inn & Suites Boston/Airport as well as President of EcoLogical Solutions Inc. Saunders has pioneered some of the most acclaimed environmental standards anywhere in the hospitality industry through a dedication to clean energy and sustainable practices. His and other E2 members' leadership has brought about clean tech capital investments in biofuels, more hybrids and plug-in electric cars, wind energy and other clean energy.

E2 foresees a surge in job growth and investments through a national commitment to alternative energy. They are among a few groups to advance an economic growth message despite the current financial crisis. E2 has also supplied an informed, independent business voice on the New Energy Economy by cultivating relationships with the media.

According to Stephen Cowell, the visionary CEO of Conservation Services Group and President of the Northeast Energy Efficiency Council in Boston, “energy efficiency is the new oil.” Holly Kaufman, CEO of Environment & Enterprise Strategies, advises clients how to integrate green standards, act socially responsible and boost profitability. John Cheney of MMA Renewable Ventures, the largest financier of solar panels in the U.S., has seen auto manufacturing technology expand beyond metal stamping and auto-glass plants to produce solar energy panels for heating water and meeting rising demands for residential power in some of America's largest cities.

Paul Zorner, President and Chief

Executive Officer at Hawaii BioEnergy, is focused on energy security and creating more local jobs to achieve a carbon neutral environment. Zorner is also a Venture Partner with Finistere Partners in San Diego, and serves as the Chairman of Kuehnle AgroSystems (Hawaii) whose focus is to generate power from new sources including algae to support the production of auto, marine and aviation fuels.

Our nation is at the threshold of employing more than three million workers and enhancing consumer confidence. The Natural Resources Defense Council says it is time to repower, refuel and rebuild America through green economic recovery. Furthermore, the world's esteemed scientists could soon gauge a major reduction in global warming pollutants as America frees itself from its reliance on foreign oil.

I recall the adage during the U.S. steel industry collapse of the 1970s and 1980s: it's a recession when your neighbor loses his job but it's a depression when you lose your own. While millions of Americans have recently suffered major hardships, others persevere working part-time or are regretfully under employed.

America's working families are central to our country's long-term prosperity. Skilled labor has been the underpinning of America's workforce for generations. The Michigan Building Trades Council's Patrick Devlin says “green collar” jobs are the leading edge and indicate how to advance America's construction and manufacturing workforce. As Chief Elected Officer, Devlin has witnessed the best in American ingenuity and skilled professions over the past 30 years. The Building Trades Department of the AFL-CIO includes 13 unions and two million-plus skilled workers and endorses the stimulus package to invest in infrastructure and rescue nearly one million skilled labor jobs over the next two years.

If America's comeback story is to succeed, how will the next-generation workforce partake? What national service role will America's youth join in to advance clean energy and sustainable business practices during the most ambitious win-win proposition in history?

Aric Caplan is President of Caplan Communications. ■

PR NEWS BRIEFS

■ **FD shows green cred**

FD has acquired The Element Agency, a liberal-leaning environmental and political PR firm with operations in Vancouver and New York. Six-year-old Element has worked on sustainability and CSR programs for clients like AIG, MGM Mirage, AARP, the Ontario Liberal Party and the Rainforest Alliance.

The firm will now be known as FD Element. Ed Reilly, who heads FD Americas, said the firm has worked with Element President Don Millar and Partner Grant Draper for years. Millar is well-known in Canada for his political advertising and PR work for the Liberal Party and earlier efforts to help Democratic candidates in the U.S. through The Conover Millar Group in D.C. Draper was a top aide to Eliot Spitzer's 2006 successful campaign for governor of New York and his 2003 election as attorney general of the state.

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