

Portland's mantra: 'Green' will mean new jobs

Wanted by Portland: clean technology and sustainable industries to employ 10,000

Sunday, April 26, 2009

JAMES MAYER

The Oregonian Staff

FACTBOX

- [City's strategy](#)

Portland's storied quality of life, promoted through city policies in transit, planning, housing and other services, has attracted a wave of creative talent to the city, but not a lot of jobs.

Mayor Sam Adams wants a new economic development strategy he hopes will brand Portland as the nation's most sustainable city, will focus community colleges and universities on developing training programs for workers in targeted industries, and create 10,000 new family-wage jobs.

"In doing so, we will make Portland the hub for the global green economy," Adams said in his State of the City speech in February.

The investments in Portland's lifestyle will pay economic dividends, "but the emphasis needs to shift to economic development to realize those benefits," a draft of the plan says.

The plan targets clean technology and sustainable industries, sport-clothing design, software and advanced manufacturing, such as the city's metals industry. The goal is to attract new businesses in these fields to Portland and to help existing companies.

The mayor has appointed an economic cabinet to oversee creation of the city of Portland Economic Development Strategy. The cabinet, which includes representatives from Portland business and labor groups, government and academia, faces a daunting task. The world economy is being wrenched by its worst crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Willing to adjust

At a recent meeting of the cabinet, some business leaders worried that the emphasis on sustainable industries could blind the city to other opportunities. But Adams assured them that the city will not ignore opportunities that arise even if they are not in one of the target industries.

"It's good to have a strategy," said Tom Potiowsky, the state economist and a cabinet member. But he cautioned, "You never know what the next technological breakthrough will be, and you want to be part of that."...

Read the Full Article
Visit our Archive

