

Renewable Energy Workforce

A Newsletter of the Silicon Valley Solar Industry-Driven Regional Collaborative
for Solar Workforce Development



ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

through the
CALIFORNIA
COMMUNITY
COLLEGES

Ohlone joins Cabrillo and San Jose City Colleges

Third program added in the South Bay

Ohlone College in Newark joins Cabrillo College and San Jose City College as the third school with the Solar IDRC grant to successfully launch a Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Installer Training program. Ohlone's program started on September 7 and is led by Hal Aronson. Many know Hal from his affiliation with Rarus Institute and the Solar Schoolhouse, programs dedicated to accelerating implementation of resource efficient technologies. Hal indicated that besides energy efficiency he is also planning to stress safety. Installers are often asking about safety curriculum, and Hal says it will be a major topic in Ohlone's program.

Returning September 4 after a summer hiatus is Cabrillo's PV program. The fall session will be taught by Steve Murphy. Steve has over 30 years of experience in solar and sustainable construction practices. As in the past, Steve will be assisted by several generous installers who contribute as guest lecturers.

Returning for its third session is the San Jose City College program led by Matt Welch. Matt works days as a lead installer for Renewable Power Solutions and then teaches installation classes at night. We don't know how he does it, but he is a good example of the kinds of dedicated people who are striving to make the SV Solar IDRC a success.



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Student Profile

Meet Adam Zellhoefer

A variety of opportunities open when a student can combine solar installer training with their previous education and work experience skills. Such was the case with Solar IDRC program participant Adam Zellhoefer who interned at Borrego Solar. Berkeley Operations Manager, Jason Askins, had a data entry need, and after interviewing several students, Adam seemed like the solution. Adam was brought in to help with extensive rebate paperwork and quickly found himself working more and more with operations conducting site analyses and field inspections. However, Adam's real desire was to be

on roofs, and towards the end of the internship he was working on installations more frequently. Jason was more than pleased with Adam's contributions.

"Adam was a great help," Askins stated. "It is a tremendous asset to have a go-to person who can take care of anything and fill in the gaps when needed," he said. "I would hire Adam again, because of his attitude and PV knowledge resulting from the Solar training program."

"I couldn't buy such a priceless education," Adam commented. There will be many more "Adams" available as interns for your company in November. Contact us at (408) 972-0506 if you have a position we can help fill.

SV Solar IDRC Partners

- SolarTech
- Silicon Valley Leadership Group
- NOVA WIB
- De Anza College
- Mission College
- San Jose City College
- Cabrillo College
- West Valley College
- Ohlone College



Adam Zellhoefer, Cabrillo College student and Borrego Solar Intern, standing proudly on the roof of the Pacific Primary School in San Francisco.



Luis Sonsino, adjunct instructor, demonstrates the Sun's path across the sky to Cabrillo College students.

Focus on Cabrillo's Solar Training Program

Cabrillo College in Aptos, California, has a long history in building trades skill development and other industrial programs. It also has a long history in environmental studies. So it was an easy step to combine the two and launch into Solar Installer Training this last February. Under the leadership of Joe Jordan, Cabrillo signed on to the Silicon Valley Solar Industry-Driven Regional Collaborative grant spearheaded by De Anza and Mission Colleges. Joe had been teaching renewable energy programs at Cabrillo since 2001 and is very active in many volunteer installation programs. He spearheaded the installation of solar PV in several Santa Cruz area schools. It was an easy step for Joe to move into the solar installer instructor role.

Classes started on February 14 and met for 16 Thursday evenings for 3 hours. By

spring there was enough evening sun to spend the first ninety minutes on lab activities. The school's carpentry department built a mock roof on which students could work. With twenty solar panels and several inverters, the students could put class-room theory into practice. The program enjoyed considerable support from local companies such as REgrid Power, SolFocus, and Independent Energy Systems. Luis Sonsino, adjunct instructor and local installer, provided invaluable industry knowledge. Class finished on June 5 with 20 out of 22 students passing the NABCEP Entry Level Exam.

Steve Murphy will take over for the fall as Joe is a busy guy with teaching commitments at San Jose State University. However, Joe is still very active at Cabrillo, and we look forward to his return for the Spring 2009 session.

Employer Comments

"The program is a tremendous asset to the Solar industry; providing knowledgeable, trained, and quality people for Integrators supports a significant need of the industry."

- Jason Askins, Borrego Solar

"REgrid Power continues to have great success employing graduates of these programs."

- Darlene McCalmont,
REgrid Power

Intern Positions Needed

The SV Solar IDRC program needs your support to continue this great work. Students from all three schools will be available to enter the workforce in mid November. Approximately 30 students are interested in internship positions. This is a great benefit and opportunity for your company. Contact David McFeely at (408) 972-0506 if you can make internship positions available for these highly qualified and enthusiastic students.

More Information, Program Contacts:

Rick Kuhn: Director, De Anza College Professional & Workforce Development/CACT,
kuhnrick@fhda.edu, 408-864-8302

Catherine Ayers: Co-Director, SV Solar IDRC,
ayerscatherine@fhda.edu, 650-593-4701

Bruce Whistler: Director, Mission College Workplace Learning Resource Center,
bruce_whistler@wvm.edu, 408-855-5204

David McFeely: De Anza, Internship Marketing and Newsletter Editor,
mcfelydavid@fhda.edu, 408-972-0506