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‘Growing Green Careers’ focus of Cuyamaca College symposium

Oct. 16 daylong forum joins industry with education in ‘greening’ the classroom

EL CAJON – With all the buzz surrounding the burgeoning green industry and the promise it holds for a flagging jobs market, Cuyamaca College is hosting a forum this week aimed at helping local high school and community college educators ride the wave of what’s come to be known as the green economy.

A free symposium, **“Growing Green Careers,” is planned for 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 16, inside the new communication arts theater** for instructors, administrators and counselors to hear experts talk about the vital link between emerging green industries and education, and to share ideas on preparing students for promising jobs on the horizon.

Sponsored by the Economic and Workforce Development Program of the California Community Colleges, the event at the Rancho San Diego campus will highlight programs such as renewable energy, automotive/transportation, environmental management, green construction, landscaping, energy efficiency, and water /wastewater technology.

“What better place than Cuyamaca College – one of the greenest campuses you’ll find anywhere – to hold this timely event,” said Chancellor Cindy L. Miles. “And I mean ‘green’ in every sense: from the college’s visual landscape to its renowned programs preparing students for green jobs. These are the up-and-coming careers forecast for growth as people become increasingly aware of the critical need to protect limited environmental resources.

“The Water Conservation Garden at Cuyamaca College is not only a learning environment, but a model for the entire community and beyond.”

Governing Board President Bill Garrett said the symposium reflects the district’s commitment to career technical education and its direct impact on the state’s economy.

“The symposium offers an important opportunity for business and industry leaders to speak directly to educators about the workforce skills they’re looking for,” he said. “Jobs tied to these green industries require specific skills. Educators and industry representatives will benefit from open dialogue about the programs and curricula being introduced to meet the training needs of these emerging fields.”

An event highlight will be the unveiling of a model of a soon-to-be-constructed wing of Scripps Ranch High School, which will house its sustainable technologies program. Aptly named, with its abundance of glass panels for optimum natural lighting, along with solar panels, wind turbines, and use of crushed glass and other recycled materials, the school’s Green Technology and Energy Building will offer hands-on learning for students. They can

monitor energy-usage data from a bank of sleek computer screens inside the lobby of an observation tower, or check out the old-world technology of a sundial etched in concrete at the entrance of the alternative fuels building.

Greg Quirin, a program specialist in career and technical education at San Diego Unified, who will be presenting the model, said the building is the K-12 school district's first foray into introducing green technologies as a career path.

"The facility, along with the corresponding sequence of courses, is likely to be the first ever of its kind in the state of California offering college and career preparation in green technologies," he said.

The forum's keynote speakers are Rene Trevino, executive director of the Navy Region Southwest, which encompasses six states and 75,000 active-duty sailors, and Mark Cafferty, president and CEO of the San Diego Workforce Partnership, a \$50 million non-profit umbrella organization for job-training programs.

"They will address the diverse educational opportunities presented by the community college system," said Cuyamaca College Interim President Ron Manzoni. "Cuyamaca College takes special pride in presenting this event because it was our proposal selected by a regional consortium of college deans to receive a \$90,000 grant from the state chancellor's office to fund the symposium and related activities."

Manzoni said Cuyamaca's course offerings in water/wastewater technology and development of a new degree and certificate program in sustainable urban landscaping, in addition to a just-announced \$1 million state grant to further enhance green-jobs training, are examples of the college continuing to lead the way in preparing future workers in the emerging green industry.

Also speaking will be Kelly Jenkins-Pultz, a program analyst with the U.S. Department of Labor, whose topic focuses on women in green careers.

Panel presentations by industry leaders, including the manager of electric transportation for San Diego Gas & Electric and director of programs at the California Center for Sustainable Energy, will be followed by breakout sessions led by educators including Rick Wilson, a professor in Cuyamaca's environmental health and safety management program, and Brad Monroe, coordinator of the college's ornamental horticulture program.

The group discussions moderated by Cuyamaca instructors, as well as those from San Diego Miramar and City colleges, and San Diego Unified School District, the San Diego Electrical Training Center, and others, will provide opportunities to share what schools and colleges are doing across the state to prepare students for these up-and-coming careers. Event coordinator Alan Ridley said he hopes the symposium will lead to other public events to further highlight Cuyamaca's embracing of green technology and the college's broadening educational scope.

"This is the culmination of my lifelong interest in green energy," said Ridley, who has provided wind farm tours and green roof seminars to the public through the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District's continuing education program. "I have been walking on air these last few months. This is truly exciting."

To register for the limited number of seats still available for the symposium, online registration is available at www.sdicoe.net/events.asp. For further information, email alan.ridley@gcccd.edu or call him at (619) 660-4425.

Cuyamaca College is at **900 Rancho San Diego Parkway in Rancho San Diego**. For campus and driving maps and more about the college, go to www.cuyamaca.edu.

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