

Money is available for Job Creation

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By Cheryl Brown

Money is available from the US Department of Commerce, Wilfred Marshall, the regional representative told attendees at the EDA Workshop for the Green Valley Initiative this week. Marshall said however, there is a catch, it has to produce jobs. Not just any job but living wage jobs. Not just a few but many and 50% of the money to do this has to come from the private sector.

Marshall was excited to see how the local municipalities from San Bernardino and Riverside Counties were working together to partner on the new jobs initiative that can be found in the green economy, and wants to see the initiative duplicated all over the state.

According to SE Corporation president Ali Sahabi, the event was sponsored by the Green Institute for Village Empowerment (GIVE) and was to set a framework for green technology businesses and job creation in the Inland Empire. It is supported by 500 key leaders representing local government, water and utility agencies, business organizations, educational entities, environmental groups and the community –at-large. Sahabi is proud that it has been noted as one of the key green movements in the nation.

Marshall said anyone who can create jobs can qualify even if the job is not green related. “My mandate is to create jobs period!” he told the group of local government representatives.

Marshall said that the question his agency asks is what do you want to do? How do you want to do it? How many jobs can be created? And how soon can the jobs be created. “I am not interested unless it is \$3 million or less. Non profits can participate,” he said. The money awarded can be spent for construction but the construction jobs are temporary so they will not be included in the jobs creation credit.

Also housing programs are not eligible.

The other requirement is that the project to be developed be in a high unemployment, or low income area. The jobs that are created will need to pay \$14-\$15 per hour. In qualify only if it is ancillary to the other jobs. For example if a retail job is needed to support the living wage job it can be considered.

In Cathedral City, the grant paid for infrastructure around a hotel, because the hotel created jobs. In Perris near the Ramona Expressway, the county received a grant for business retention and attraction so they could expand roads and sewers.

Office buildings can be considered if they can create revenue. The department will give \$5000 for every job that can be created up to the \$3 million figure.

Marshall answered every question and there were many asked. In this slow economy jobs are the most important thing he indicated.

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