

Dept. of Labor launches 'green jobs guide for women' in Portland

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Women's Bureau chose Portland and Oregon Tradeswomen Inc., (OTI) to launch a national campaign to help women pursue careers in the emerging green sectors.

Portland was chosen because of its commitment to environmental protection and a more sustainable future, and OTI was selected because of its success promoting women in nontraditional trades and green jobs, said Betty Lock, regional administrator, DOL Women's Bureau, Region 10.

The Women's Bureau has developed a resource — "Why Green is Your Color: A Woman's Guide to a Sustainable Career" — to provide an overview of the types of green jobs that are available and the skills needed to get them. The guide shows how to identify training opportunities, gives suggestions about how to pay for training, and describes how to start green businesses. It also points out common barriers to career advancement and offers tips to overcoming them, and showcases the success stories of women who have already joined the green economy.

One of the success stories high-



Connie Ashbrook (left), director of Oregon Tradeswomen Inc., joins Betty Lock of the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau at a press conference Feb. 28 in Portland to launch a new guide for women to enter green jobs.

lighted in the guide is that of Tara Webb, an apprentice electrician and member of Portland-based International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48. Webb has worked on windmill towers and already has a con-

siderable amount of installation work experience in the renewable energy industry.

DOL defines "green economy" activity related to reducing the use of fossil fuels, decreasing pollution and

greenhouse gas emissions, increasing the efficiency of energy usage, recycling materials, and developing and adopting renewable sources of energy.

Jobs in these occupations, which DOL says remain virtually untapped by women, require different kinds of training and work experience. In some cases, women may be certified for an occupation by taking a single course or exam, and/or on-the-job training may be available through an employer, apprenticeship, or internship. In other cases, the path to a green occupation may require an associate degree, bachelor's degree, or more.

At a press conference Feb. 29 at OTI's office in Northeast Portland, Lock was joined by Anne Wetmore, Washington State director, DOL, Office of Apprenticeship; Connie Ashbrook, executive director of OTI; and a half-dozen graduates from OTI's Trades and Apprenticeship Career Class (including Webb) who now work in unionized nontraditional trades.

"We know that women can play a much greater role in reducing our overall reliance on foreign oil through careers that promote energy efficiencies and renewable energy development,"

Lock said.

The guide is broken up into browseable sections for whatever stage of the career finding process an individual is in, from an introduction to green career choices to plotting out a career path. The guide is available in its entirety for free in both PDF and HTML form on the Department of Labor website at http://www.dol.gov/wb/Green_Jobs_Guide/.

GREEN AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

DOL points out 12 key sectors of the green economy:

- Agriculture and forestry
- Energy and carbon capture
- Energy efficiency
- Energy trading
- Environmental protection
- Governmental/regulatory admin
- Green construction
- Manufacturing
- Recycling and waste reduction
- Renewable energy generation
- Research, design, and consulting
- Transportation

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