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“It is imperative that Rhode Island seize the green economy opportunities, bring together invested stakeholders and build a cohesive plan to further develop a strong economy and increase the sustainable job force.”

*J. Michael Saul,
Interim Executive Director
RIEDC*

Governor Carcieri Signs Bill Fostering Support of Renewable Energy Industry

Leaders from all sectors of the community convened June 26, 2009 to participate in the Green Economy Roundtable. Hosted by the Governor, Senate President, Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Interim Executive Director of the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, the primary objective of this event was to create a clear strategy for the growth and advancement of Rhode Island’s green economy.



Governor Carcieri signs a bill fostering support of the renewable energy industry. Looking on are (left to right:) State Senator Miller, House Majority Leader Fox, State Representative Ehrhardt, State Representative Ruggiero and Michael Ryan, President, RI Division – National Grid.

More than 120 participants, including Lt. Gov. Elizabeth H. Roberts and General Treasurer Frank Caprio, worked together to craft a green economy vision and action plan for Rhode Island, which detailed the states assets, the future vision and ways to get there. Participants were comprised of policy makers,



Michael Saul, Interim Director of the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, addresses attendees at the RIEDC’s Green Economy Roundtable.

business leaders, labor, thought-leaders, research/academic community, capital providers, environmentalists, non-profit organizations and others.

Governor Donald L. Carcieri kicked off the event by addressing attendees and signing the landmark legislation allowing National Grid to enter into long-term

Participants were tasked with identifying green economy opportunities and developing ideas that would assist in accelerating the top five initiatives in Rhode Island.

contracts to purchase green energy.

He was joined by House Majority Leader Gordon Fox, Chairman Joshua Miller, Senate Corporation Committee and President Michael F. Ryan of National Grid. Following the legislative speakers, Interim Executive Director of the RIEDC, J.



Christopher Benzak of Newport Biodiesel, Craig Swanson of EBC Rhode Island Chapter, J. Michael Saul, Director of the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, and Jon Duffy of Duffy & Shanley (left to right) engage in a table discussion at the RIEDC's Green Economy Roundtable, at the Crowne Plaza.

Michael Saul outlined the day's activities and detailed how job opportunities in the green sector are comprised of new, natural and convertible opportunities. The group was charged with evaluating Rhode Island's assets and determining opportunities that will drive forth the green economy and increase jobs.

Growth Opportunities

Energy efficiency:

The benefits gained through investments in energy efficiency were described as vast. Essentially energy efficiency does two things, one lower energy costs and two creates jobs for the Rhode Island workforce.

Manufacturing:

Renewable energy technology manufacturing is a natural transition for Rhode Island's workforce. Participants said that we must leverage our workforce, known for its high productivity and diverse skill is set. The state's long tradition in metals, electronics, plastics and other manufacturing can be complemented by an expanding workforce in green technology.

Policy:

Participants said that political leadership is important for the development of the green economy in Rhode Island. The passing and signing of the legislation at the event was a pivotal moment in showcasing the political support for a green economy. One of the acceleration initiatives in the policy arena is to



General Treasurer Frank Caprio (left) and Paul Rich, Chief Development Officer, Deepwater Wind organize their notes before presenting their table discussion reports at the RIEDC's Green Economy Roundtable, at the Crowne Plaza in Warwick.

“The Roundtable is an exciting chance to exchange ideas and share insights on how best to develop a cohesive strategy to grow the green economy in our state.”
Governor Donald L. Carcieri

create a study to determine the best incentives for renewable energy and other green policies. All participants agreed that intergovernmental alignment and streamlining state and local permitting, licensing and regulatory procedures would create a strong competitive advantage for business attraction and retention in Rhode Island.



Attendees at the RIEDC's Green Economy Roundtable: (left to right) John DiBiase, IBEW Local 99, Ron Leddy, IBEW Local 99, Paul McDonald IBEW Local 99, Al Durand, IBEW Local 99, Governor Donald Carcieri, Chris Wisseman, Managing Director, Deepwater Wind, Jim Lanard, Managing Director Deepwater, Wind, Paul Rich, Chief Development Officer, Deepwater Wind.

R&D and innovation:

It was agreed that Rhode Island's higher education institutions, research and technical skills are enormous assets for the state. Expanding programs that encourage collaboration such as the Slater Technology Fund and the RIEDC's partnership with the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Brown University as well as the Rhode Island Science and Technology Advisory Council was a key recommendation.

Wind:

Rhode Island is in the lead position to build the first offshore wind farm in the United States and pave the way for the Eastern Seaboard in a \$50 billion industry. Deepwater Wind, the offshore wind developer chosen to construct a wind energy project off the shores of Rhode Island that will provide 1.3 million megawatt hours per year of renewable energy, plans to create more than 800 jobs and make Quonset their hub for the East Coast.



Governor Donald Carcieri addresses attendees at the RIEDC's Green Economy Roundtable, at the Crowne Plaza in Warwick.

“Rhode Island’s renewable energy resources, our state’s commitment to energy efficiency and our wealth of ‘green tech’ talent give our state enormous potential to become the epicenter of the emerging alternative energy market.”

J. Michael Saul,

Interim Executive Director
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Wrapping It Up

At the conclusion of the event, J. Mike Saul proposed to set up a “green policy council,” which won overwhelming support, to serve a role analogous to what the Science and Technology Advisory Council plays to the knowledge-based economy.

Feedback received from participants was that they hope the RIEDC continues efforts to advance the green economy in Rhode Island.



Attendees at the RIEDC’s Green Economy Roundtable at the Crowne Plaza in Warwick vote on suggestions posted on the wall following the table discussions.

Moving Ahead

RIEDC and members of the Planning Committee met to discuss the next steps to continue the momentum from the Green Economy Roundtable.

- ✓ **Create a council**
Outline the role and implementation the council will play in the development of Rhode Island’s green economy
- ✓ **Develop a comprehensive “road map”** with measurable action steps and initiatives
- ✓ **Assess policy opportunities for the state of Rhode Island.**
The Governor and General Sssembly should introduce comprehensive package of “green economy” legislation at the next session
- ✓ **Build a communications strategy** that will connect the thought leaders in a meaningful and ongoing manner
- ✓ **Announce the council formation in fall 2009.** At the first council meeting, RIEDC will unveil the detailed roadmap, update participants and council on steps that have been taken since the June event, and invite a compelling speaker of national recognition to address the group

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