

Valley chasing green businesses

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By Erica Solvig

Communities across the Inland Empire are joining forces in an effort to attract more green companies to the region.

Riverside and San Bernardino counties, as well as most Coachella Valley communities, have approved resolutions backing the Green Valley Initiative.

Another 30 communities are expected to approve it soon, including the San Jacinto City Council on Aug. 7.

The Corona-based Initiative gets communities to partner on green efforts and grants, thereby offering incentives for green technology industries — and jobs — to come to the Inland Empire.

“If people make changes, that will create a larger market and the simple business model is that if there's a big market, people will come to serve that market,” program director Daniel Cozad said.

“The great advantage that we have now is that a lot of this is economically advantageous (for companies).”

The growing support for the Green Valley Initiative comes at a time when communities nationwide are becoming more environmentally friendly.

The Coachella Valley Association of Government's executive committee in January passed a model resolution for energy conservation and resource sustainability, said environmental resources director Katie Barrows.

The resolution included support for the Green Valley Initiative and a regional effort “to transform Riverside and San Bernardino counties into a center of green technology.”

Most desert cities have approved similar ordinances.

Riverside and San Bernardino counties also are partnering on a \$1 million grant proposal to the U.S. Department of Labor in order to fund solar and wind energy technician training here.

Such collaborations increase the chances of getting money as well as attracting economic development from other regions, Cozad said.

“To us, it doesn't matter if it comes to Cathedral City or Palm Springs; it matters that it comes to the Riverside-San Bernardino market,” he said.