

Alternative Energy Increasingly Powers Southern California's Lifestyle And Economy.

Industry and government leaders converged on "ground zero for alternative energy" at the fourth annual Southern California Energy Summit in Palm Springs. The conference featured the growing use of cutting edge alternative energy technologies powering more of Southern California's homes and business, as well as, the region's economic rebound.

Palm Springs, CA (PRWEB) January 07, 2014



A buzz of excitement and renewed hope for the future filled the fourth annual [Southern California Energy Summit](#) where industry and government leaders converged on Palm Springs, known as "ground zero for alternative energy."

Say, Wesley Ahlgren, Coachella Valley Economic Partnership Chief Operating Officer in an interview with Southern California CEO Magazine "We say that because we have so many renewable energy sources right here. We've got geothermal, wind, solar, algae, biomass – everything within a 60 mile radius of here," said Wesley Ahlgren, [Coachella Valley Economic Partnership](#) Chief Operating Officer.



The summit, October 3-4, showcased the expertise of more than three-dozen alternative energy speakers and an exhibition hall filled with cutting edge technologies. [The Southern California Gas Company showed how some of its natural gas technologies continue to evolve](#) as an ultra-clean resource which can make up for the shortfalls of intermittent energy sources, such as wind and solar power.

"There are ways of making methane, which is what natural gas is, from feed stocks. That's referred to as 'renewable natural gas,'" said Jeffrey Reed, Southern California Gas Company Director of Emerging Technologies. "It has very low emissions and it has zero carbon. So, we would look forward to the future of more and more blending of carbon neutral natural gas with conventional gas."

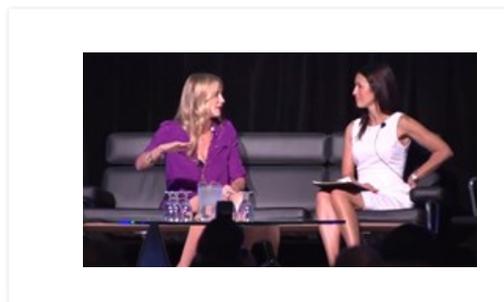
It's likely the City of Riverside would be among the first to jump at utilizing any of the new technologies.

Riverside is always looking for new projects to power the growing city. "We're right now at 20% renewable, on our way to 33% as far as our portfolio of renewable resources," said Michael Bacich, Riverside Public Utilities Assistant General Manager, and Riverside Sustainability Officer.

While many cities are forming their first "green" action plan, Riverside is now on the third evolution of its blueprint for sustaining the use renewable energy. It has so much going on, Riverside even started a website, called "[GreenRiverside.com](#)," to showcase all the projects and help improve the community.

The increased use of green energy in the region is also powering the Inland Empire's economic recovery. There is some misconception renewable energy projects provide only short term jobs, said Robert Frost, [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 440](#) Business Manager. "We have about 1,900 electricians working on these projects. Its helped us double the size of our apprenticeship program in the last year just to prepare to man this work. And it's created a lot of jobs to lead them to a future pathway."

Frost was also among the many speakers at the conference. He said "cooperation" will be the key to get government and businesses to fully develop the local renewable resources industry, and get people back to work in the I-E.



Daryl Hannah, Actress and environmental activist, speaks at the SoCal Energy Summit in Palm Springs, CA

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Contact

Dwight Cromie
[Altek Media Group](#)
951-781-8624
[Email](#)

Bill Friedl
[Altek Media Group](#)
951-781-8624

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The community college system will also play a big role in developing a local skilled workforce to attract more of the renewable resources industry. [The College of the Desert](#) in Palm Desert has not only started workforce training programs, it has also started a degree program, called "Energy Systems Technologies." "We're working to not only get people trained for the industry as it grows in our area, but we're working to educate students for careers in that industry over the long run," said Larry McLaughlin, Deputy Sector Navigator for Advanced Transportation and Renewables at College of the Desert.



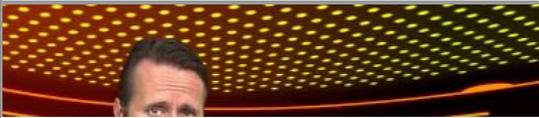
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