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Pathway To Green Jobs

The Tri-Valley Business Council (TVBC) has launched a task force with the mission of creating in the local schools a career pathway leading to jobs in the emerging "green" sector.

The plan calls for a partnership involving educators, business people and public officials. Students would be directed toward green jobs, a career pathway that would begin in the high schools and continue through the community colleges and Cal State East Bay. The program would focus on the high-tech skills needed to develop alternative energy and reduce global warming.

Task force leaders say the Valley has the potential to be on the cutting edge of the new green industries. "We can lead the world into sustainability," said Congressman Jerry McNerney, who was the keynote speaker at the task force's kickoff two weeks ago.

The daylong event, held at Las Positas Community College, was chaired by Jim Caldwell. Caldwell owns Workforce Incubator, a nonprofit, and is the prime mover behind this project.

The next step will involve preparing a report by the next school year on how the area's high schools and colleges can develop the desired green-job pathway.

Joel Kinnamon, chancellor of the Chabot/Las Positas Community College District, said students want to make the world a better place.

"Obama (the presidential candidate) figured out some way to tap into that fire," Kinnamon said. "If the community could create a way to tap into it and inspire young people to become involved, it would make a big difference. We have a responsibility to lead in that."

With global warming throwing a grim shadow over the future, community leaders must indeed tap into that fire and create the skilled and inspired work force the times demand. Bravo, Business Council, bravo for undertaking this all-important mission.

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