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Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson Launches Green Initiative

Johnson touts opportunity to be 'Greenest Capital' in US and transform region into an 'Emerald Valley'

SACRAMENTO – Mayor Kevin Johnson launched his Green Initiative at the California History Museum today in an effort to align the region behind a common vision that will make Sacramento the greenest region in the country and a hub for green technology.

“This is an exciting time to be a Californian – there is a buzz around all things “green.” In Sacramento, we have the opportunity to be the greenest capital in the greenest state in the nation. I am confident our efforts will help to create more jobs and diversify the economy. It’s time for the region to walk the walk when it comes to living green,” Johnson said.

The purpose of the initiative is to convene leaders from the businesses, non-profits, labor, academic and government sectors, as well as groups representing low income individuals and communities of color in order to coordinate, align and leverage efforts regionally around a common vision and set sustainability goals focused on the environment, economy and education.

Four principles will guide the initiative. They include fostering a regional green economy; creating green collar jobs; developing policies and practices that attract and support green business; and increasing public awareness, or “Green IQ”.

The 8-month initiative will be lead by a diverse task force with a high level of knowledge and expertise. The task force will meet on a monthly basis for the duration of the initiative and will be organized into the following five policy areas: Energy, Waste and Recycling, Water and Nature, Urban Design and Green Building, and Green & Clean Technology.

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, the event’s featured speaker, discussed the importance of creating a bold vision as California has led the worldwide green movement.

“California has led the way in enacting ambitious policies and programs to combat climate change, reduce our dependency on oil and grow our green economy,” said Governor Schwarzenegger. “We do not wait to take action in California and it is the action that cities like Sacramento are taking that will continue our legacy of being the greenest and most innovative state in the nation. I applaud Mayor Johnson for his commitment to reduce emissions, protect our planet and grow our economy for generations to come.”

First Lady Maria Shriver was also on hand to deliver opening remarks. Earlier in the day, Johnson joined her to celebrate the 1-year anniversary of the State Capitol Garden. The garden is part of the 'WE Garden' program created by Shriver to educate and inspire Californians about the important lessons gardens teach our communities.

"I commend Mayor Kevin Johnson for his leadership and extraordinary efforts to create a greener, more sustainable environment in the Sacramento region," said First Lady Maria Shriver. "I've learned through my WE Garden program how gardens can positively transform students, schools and communities. They are a remarkable resource for teaching important life lessons around healthy living and improving communities. Mayor Johnson's Green Initiative will do the same and will transform Sacramento and bring people together to contribute towards better living and stronger communities."

Johnson believes Sacramento has a distinct competitive advantage in the green arena based on a number of key factors including its strategic location, climate and geography and recent growth in the field.

Over half of California's green buildings are in the Sacramento region, putting it on SustainLane's Top 10 list for U.S cities with the most green buildings and 8th in the country for LEED construction. Sacramento is ranked 3rd in the nation for "Green Economy" and has experienced an 87 percent growth in green jobs over the last 13 years. This is the largest increase in California. Sacramento is ranked Top 10 in the U.S. for Clean Tech Job activity by Clean Edge in 2009 and the region anticipates an additional 10,000 clean tech jobs will be added in the next 10 years.

Additionally, the Sacramento region recently received \$220 million in stimulus funding for energy efficiency programs and green job training. Sacramento was recently ranked 4th in U.S. as Electric Vehicle Ready and Propel Biofuels, a local alternative fuel start-up, recently received a \$20 million investment to expand operations.

"As an organization dedicated to building broad opportunity through green investment, we applaud the leadership of Mayor Johnson and the City of Sacramento," said Phaedra Ellis-Lamkins, CEO of Green For All. "The Green Initiative lays the foundation to transition the city towards a clean-energy future that improves the health, wealth and well-being of all its residents, including Sacramento's most vulnerable communities. We look forward to working together on best practices that position Sacramento at the forefront of clean-energy technology and good, green job creation."

Financial sponsors for the Green Initiative include Armor Steel Company, AT&T, BLT Enterprises, Pacific Gas & Electric, the United Football League, Wells Fargo, and Waste Management. In-kind sponsors are Commerce Printing, Blue Line Web Solutions, and Shades of Green Event Services.

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Mayor Johnson can be followed on:

Official Mayor's Site: www.cityofsacramento.org/mayor/

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/teamkj>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/KJ_MayorJohnson