

News from Around the Nation

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AP Business Writer

Michigan's bid for green economy faces hurdles

By JEFF KAROUB
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DETROIT (AP) - Gov. Jennifer Granholm took to a conference stage this past week to sell a national audience on her vision of a green Michigan - a state whose natural resources, hungry workforce and empty plants can attract alternative energy jobs.

It's not a new pitch for a governor who has made a mantra out of the promise of wind, solar, biofuels and batteries for the manufacturing-dependent state. But nearing the end of a decade in which Michigan is estimated to lose 1 million jobs and Granholm exits the gubernatorial stage, the selling job takes on added urgency.

Energy experts and executives at the same conference say it's a green gamble for Michigan or any state to take, and time is not on their side. They argue the federal government is creating unrealistic expectations for the development of - and economic development from - new energy sources.

"States must resist the 'fallacy' that 'so-called' green jobs created by alternative-energy development will drive the economic recovery," said James Mulva, chairman and chief executive of Houston-based ConocoPhillips Co., one of the nation's largest oil and gas companies.

He and Granholm spoke in separate sessions June 16 at the National Summit,

a three-day gathering of business, government and academic leaders in Detroit that wrapped up June 17. They sought to craft a plan to keep the U.S. competitive in manufacturing, energy, technology and the environment.

"In reality, these sources will cost more than fossil fuels; energy prices will rise," Mulva said. "This could actually hurt the economy and cost jobs or make the U.S. less competitive than countries with cheaper energy."

The International Energy Agency predicts that between 2006 and 2030, worldwide energy demand will grow 45 percent and the sources of supply will remain largely as they are now.

Mulva said the nation "must develop a more diverse basket of energy supplies," but replacing fossil fuels would take "unimaginable effort" advancing the necessary technology, skilled labor and capital investment.

Granholm, a Democrat, was joined on a panel by Van Jones, the White House's special adviser for green jobs, enterprise and innovation. She said she has no intention of scrapping existing industries, but she said green jobs represent Michigan's biggest opportunity for replacing a "good chunk" of lost manufacturing jobs.

The Great Lakes can provide wind for power generation, and the state's advanced manufacturing work force and facilities can adapt to develop wind turbines and related equipment,

Granholm said. The state also is home to Hemlock Semiconductor, which makes polycrystalline silicon for solar cells.

"We're technology neutral. Green is not the only sector we're going after, but it's really such a big deal," she said. "We intend to lead the nation into energy independence."

A study released this month by the Pew Charitable Trusts provides some support to Michigan's mission.

Solar and wind-power companies, energy-efficient light bulb makers, environmental engineering firms and others expanded their work force by 9.1 percent from 1998 to 2007, the latest year available. Michigan saw a 10.7 percent increase in clean energy jobs from 1998 to 2007.

Still, clean energy jobs haven't kept pace with overall job losses. Pew counted 22,674 clean energy jobs in Michigan in 2007. Michigan lost 38,400 jobs in April alone, and on June 17 reported its highest unemployment rate - 14.1 percent - in nearly 26 years.

Granholm recognizes the high odds but is pressing hard to reverse the slide through alternative energy. The state is offering \$700 million in tax credits to encourage development of advanced battery technology for the automotive industry and hopes for a share of federal economic stimulus money earmarked for the purpose.

Granholm used her time on the National Summit stage to personally

lobby Jones, who was seated in the front row awaiting his turn to speak.

"We're really hopeful, Van, that the administration will look favorably upon these applications" for the funding, she said, adding she's "not too proud to beg."

Jones said he appreciates Granholm's "passion for what Michigan can become." He said that the Obama administration recognizes rising energy demand and lagging supply, and seeks a diverse portfolio of energy sources including coal and oil. But he stressed the U.S. "can't drill and burn our way out" of environmental and economic challenges.

"If you want jobs of tomorrow, you have to make the products and provide the services of tomorrow: advanced energy and advanced cars," he said.

Charles Ballard, economics professor at Michigan State University, said he believes alternative energy will play a big role in the state's future, but a volatile economy and energy industry make placing bets hard. He's also concerned about overselling the idea to a state with the nation's highest jobless rate.

"On the one hand, we want a greener future. On the other hand, we want energy from fossil fuels to remain cheap," he said. "But of course, low prices for fossil fuels are a tremendous disincentive for development of alternative energy."

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Southwestern Illinois Commercial Real Estate Transactions

The Illinois Business Journal is proud to publish commercial real estate transactions recently completed by commercial brokers across Southwestern Illinois.

Caseyville

◆ The Estates of William A. Foley and Arthur C. Foley sold two acres of land on Tucker Drive to Ritchie Brothers Properties. Johnson Properties Inc. represented the sellers.

Collinsville

◆ Hendricks Commercial Properties LLC leased 15,000 sq. ft. of industrial space at 5300 Horseshoe Lake Road to Spee Dee Delivery Services Inc. BARBERMurphy Group Inc. represented both parties.

IBJ Business News

U.S. Steel back at work

About 100 steelworkers are heading back to work at U.S. Steel's Granite City Works, creating optimism that more may follow in the months to come. Dan Simmons, president of United Steel Workers Local 1899, which represents most of the workers at the plant, says orders for steel appear to be on the increase.

U.S. Steel idled the plant in December following a dramatic drop in demand for steel, and most of the workers at the plant were laid off at that time. A skeleton crew of fewer than 200 has remained on the job since then.

The returning workers will be preparing a blast furnace to go back online; U.S. Steel says approximately 400 additional maintenance workers could be recalled in the coming weeks.

Thomas to head LCCC men's basketball team

Lewis and Clark Community College in Godfrey announces that Deon Thomas, former University of Illinois standout and professional basketball player, will head the men's basketball team and assume the role of athletic director for the college.

Thomas, the U of I's all-time leading scorer and shot blocker, was originally drafted by the Dallas Mavericks, and played professionally for 14 years in Spain, Israel, Greece and Bulgaria. Most recently he has been coaching the University High School basketball team in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. Thomas also operates All-Pro Sports Academy, which provides individual skills instruction and mentoring to guards and post players in the Ft. Lauderdale area.

Sitton Consulting finishes Behavioral Health facility

Sitton Consulting Group has completed construction phase services for the Comprehensive Behavioral Health Center in East St. Louis. Sitton served as the owner's representative, overseeing construction of the project.

Korte Co. completes food bank expansion

The Korte Co. has completed the expansion of Three Square, a local nonprofit food bank that provides much-needed meals to the homeless population of Las Vegas, Nev. The 70,000-square-foot tenant improvement includes new warehouse space, meeting rooms, walk-in coolers and freezers and a state-of-the-art kitchen for prominent chefs to display their donated culinary expertise.

◆ Yenoh Land Trust leased 3,000 sq. ft. of retail space at 2533-B Vandalia Street, Echo Plaza, to Aquatic Treasures Reef Store Inc. Johnson Properties Inc. represented both parties.

Belleville

◆ Carol Amlung sold a 4,500-sq.-ft., 6-unit apartment building at 211 Freedom Drive to Chad Steele. BARBERMurphy Group Inc. represented both parties.

Edwardsville

◆ Sherrill Real Estate Investments sold the office building at 116 and 122 West Street to Bradley and Barbara Joiner. Coldwell Banker Brown Realtors represented the buyers.

Fairview Heights

◆ TDW Investment Group LLC leased 660 sq. ft. of office space at 10800 Lincoln Trail to All American Transportation. BARBERMurphy Group Inc. represented both parties.

◆ 3635 Forest Park Limited Partnership leased 3,773 sq. ft. and a one-acre lot located at 10607 Lincoln Trail to Kennedy Auto Sales. Johnson Properties Inc. represented both parties.

◆ Happy Up Inc., dba Lagoona Magoo Toys, leased a 5,700-sq.-ft. retail building at 6308 N. Illinois Street from Jan Gitcho. Johnson Properties Inc. represented the lessee.

Godfrey

◆ First United Methodist Church sold the building at 519 Grace Street to Destiny Fellowship Church. Coldwell Banker Brown Realtors represented both parties.

Highland

◆ L&G Real Estate Inc. sold approximately a 3.91-acre parcel of land to Highland Development Group LLC. Kunkel Commercial Group Inc. represented both parties.

New Baden

◆ Discount Tobacco & More LLC leased a 2,318-sq.-ft. space at 504 West Hanover from American Corp. of Belleville. Kunkel Commercial Group Inc. represented both parties.

Swansea

◆ RO-Del Enterprises leased 680 sq. ft. of office space at 1429 N. Illinois Street to Suzanne Santos. BARBERMurphy Group Inc. represented both parties.

Troy

◆ Bob Harrison and Mike Bell leased a 3,000-sq.-ft. retail building at 307 Bargraves Boulevard to Erhan Serbest. BARBERMurphy Group Inc. represented both parties.

Venice

◆ Bissell Properties LLC sold a 103,950-sq.-ft. industrial building at 1226 Bissell Street to John Cusumano. BARBERMurphy Group Inc. represented the buyer.

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