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Alternative energy firms mean jobs

By Business Report Staff

Three leaders of alternative energy companies new to the Front Range said as their firms grow they will need more workers skilled in various types of engineering.

Hans Jespersen, vice president of Vestas Blades America Inc; Craig Mataczynski, president of RES Americas Inc.; and Dennis Stoltenberg, vice president of human resources of **Abound Solar**, said electrical, physics and mechanical engineers will be needed.

The three were on the Green Inc. panel during lunch at the Boulder County Business Report's Green Summit held June 4 at the Millennium Harvest House Boulder.

Jespersen, whose Denmark-based company manufactures giant wind turbine blades for the wind-energy industry, has a new blade manufacturing plant in Windsor that already employs 600 people and is constructing manufacturing facilities in Brighton and Pueblo, is also looking for employees to work in production.

Mataczynski said Broomfield-based RES Americas, which develops and designs wind-energy sites, will need mechanical, and civil and electrical design engineers to add to its 150 employees in Colorado and 250 in the U.S.

And Stoltenberg said Abound Solar, which makes thin-film photovoltaic solar panels at its new plant in Longmont, said the company will need engineers that have expertise in glass, chemical, vacuum and thermo sciences.

The three agreed that Colorado and the Front Range is thought of as a great place to live with a skilled work force, but the state will have to step up with more business incentives for companies to stay and move here if it wants to maintain its reputation.

"We received \$30,000 in incentives to move to Broomfield from Austin, Texas, but there are states out there that are willing to plunk down millions to attract companies.

All three companies are attracting suppliers and expect other supply related companies to move into the area.

"I am urging all our suppliers in Denmark to move here," Jespersen said. Vestas' turbine blades weight from 10 to 12 tons each, and the company will use 200,000 tons of steel a year in the manufacturing process. "Material transport costs are horrendous, and I pay the freight," Jespersen said.