

Regional leaders embrace 'cleantech' movement

By now, most of us have become familiar with the terms "clean technology" and "sustainability." These are the latest buzz words being used by industry, community leaders and planners around the world.

These terms have certainly become the hot topics surrounding the development of the newly-dubbed Tri-Cities Research District, which is the area of land surrounding Pacific Northwest National Laboratory and Washington State University Tri-Cities.

The area has been zoned as a business and research park.

Leaders working on the plans for the research district are searching for ways to create a self-sustaining and environmentally friendly district with a strong slant toward high-tech business.

According to the Cleantech Network, a venture capital firm specializing in clean technology, their new technology and related business models offer competitive returns for investors and customers while providing solutions to global challenges.



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Tri-City
Economic
Development

This is somewhat different from "green technology" that became popular in the 1970s. Green technologies provide good benefits for the environment, but are not necessarily economical and therefore not very

business friendly.

Clean technologies have investors such as the Cleantech Network clamoring to find new companies to invest in.

More than \$3 billion in venture capital was invested in such enterprises over the last three years. These technologies are found in a broad range of industries, including energy, water, manufacturing materials and transportation.

With growing recognition for issues such as climate change, the price and availability of fossil fuels and water, and population growth, it is no wonder that cleantech is starting to make good business sense.

In fact, leaders and stakeholders in clean technology from our own region will be gathering this week at a workshop in Richland called Tech-

Magination: A day for imagining a clean technology agenda.

The purpose of the workshop is to bring thought leaders together to brainstorm clean technology ideas that can be implemented in the Tri-Cities Research District and throughout the Pacific Northwest.

"PNNL is proud to be hosting the TechMagination workshop next week," said Mike Schwenk, director of commercial partnerships for PNNL. "We are looking forward to hearing the innovative ideas from leaders in the fields of clean technology and sustainable development."

John Plaza, president and founder of Imperium Renewables, will provide the keynote address for the workshop and will be introduced by Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash.

Andy Mangan of the U.S. Business

Council for Sustainable Development will provide the workshop's luncheon address.

Some preliminary ideas for the research district include using solar power to run all exterior lighting in the research district and recycling rain water to be used for nonconsumptive purposes.

Organizers of the workshop are hoping to have many more creative ideas come from the participants.

TechMagination will take place Tuesday at the Shilo Inn in Richland. It is free to attend.

For more information, visit www.pnl.gov/TechMagination.

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