

Tri-Cities Research District seeing green

TechRealization's 100-person audience proved there is momentum for building a green research park in the Tri-Cities.

Local and regional leaders gathered last month in Richland to hear about progress of and near-term plans for the Tri-Cities Research District. The TCRD is one of 11 Innovation Partnership Zones in Washington, and it's arguably the furthest along in its development.

Gov. Chris Gregoire announced the IPZ designations about a year ago. IPZs are intended to develop and promote economies through innovation. The Tri-Cities and Port of Benton received a designation for research and demonstration of sustainable energy technologies.

The TCRD includes 1,600 acres and is home to more than 80 businesses. There are roughly 600 acres that still are undeveloped and available for use.

Following the governor's announcement, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory held a workshop called TechMagination. The purpose was to attract business leaders from around the state to imagine clean technology research and development potential in the Tri-Cities. Workshop organizers also asked attendees to think outside the box and recommend what the IPZ could look like and focus on.



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Economic
diversification

ideas and technology to mingle. And considering this area already has organizations with expertise and technology related to energy efficiency, it makes sense for the TCRD to focus on being green.

TechRealization highlights

Two local companies expressed interest in demonstrating renewable energy technologies in the undeveloped portion of the TCRD at TechRealization.

"We'll work with the TCRD to use the Infinia Solar System to provide power to some of the buildings," said Peter Brehm, vice president for local Infinia's business development and government relations. "I think the research district is a great way for this community to concentrate its assets and we're looking forward to being part of it."

Another local company,

This is when the Tri-Cities Research District began seeing green.

The district is an innovation ecosystem. It's the perfect place for people,

InEnTec, also has plans for how it can be part of the research district.

The topic that really started a buzz was the unveiling of the TCRD's master plan. The plan provided visual confirmation that the research district is real and growing, and it showed infrastructure and details about where people can work, shop, live and play.

By December, signs will begin to go up around the TCRD to let people know what and where it is. And beginning this fall, PNNL will offer a national-level speakers series so those interested in the TCRD can learn from others' experiences in building similar research parks.

Jackie Kerby Moore, executive director of the Sandia Science & Technology Park,

kicked things off at TechRealization. Three more speakers are lined up over the next year, and the series will be open to the public.

If you missed TechRealization, you can read about the topics discussed by visiting www.pnl.gov/techrealization. And if you're interested in being part of the development of the TCRD, visit www.tricityresearchdistrict.org.

The TCRD is an exciting development in the Tri-Cities. We have a lot of land, people and expertise to offer outside businesses and entrepreneurs. Let's hope that if we build it, they will come.

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