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## Efforts to work green launches new industry

We've all heard a lot about green jobs lately. But what exactly is a green job? When are they coming? Where can a person find one? A lot of people want to know how they can make a living while making a difference.

While I believe that any job in any company can be "greened" with the right attitude and attention to detail, there are some that fall squarely in the green job category. They often pertain to clean energy and/or energy efficiency.

There is a new program in our state that is almost ready for prime time: HomeFree Nevada. The program is designed to improve the comfort and energy efficiency of our large stock of older homes. At the same time, it will help build a new industry in our state: home performance contracting. Green jobs will include trained home-energy auditors, energy-efficiency consultants and a diverse array of contractors to handle upgrades in insulation, windows, heating and air conditioning systems, solar energy, etc.

The primary goals and benefits of the program are clear:

- \* Improve the energy efficiency, comfort, health, safety and durability of homes and buildings;
- \* Reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- \* Create green jobs within the home performance contracting industry.

Secondary benefits will include a stronger local economy, cleaner environment and an improved quality of life for Nevadans.

The HomeFree Nevada program is expected to roll out this summer. It will provide a means for homeowners to reduce their home's energy consumption through a single, consistent and professional program that will include a comprehensive home-energy audit based on nationally recognized Residential Energy Services Network standards. A list of detailed home improvements will be recommended to the customer. Prequalified contractors will be trained to provide necessary parts and services. The final stage includes retesting to assure quality and performance.

HomeFree Nevada is based on a national program from the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Energy called Home Performance with Energy Star. Auditors are trained as Home Energy Rating System raters and the Building Performance Institute building analysts. This combination assures a high level of expertise in determining what steps are best for each customer. A funding component will be included in the program but details have not yet been finalized. In most cases, the goal is to pay for the improvements with the energy savings they generate, thus making the program cost-neutral.

The Nevada program has been in development for several months through a collaborative effort that includes the cities of Las Vegas, North Las Vegas and Henderson; Clark County; Southwest Gas; Nevada Division of Housing; University of Nevada, Las Vegas; University of Nevada, Reno; Sierra Club, American Institute of Architects Nevada; Nevada Conservation League; Southwest Energy

Efficiency Partnership; Nevada State Bank; National Renewable Energy Laboratory; private contractors and concerned citizens.

Program sponsors include the Las Vegas Valley Water District/Las Vegas Springs Preserve; NV Energy; and the Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition. Les Lazareck will be the program manager.

As a member of the initial concept committee, which came together more than a year ago, it has been very encouraging to witness the positive collaboration between so many diverse organizations in our community. An initial core group of participants helped the program get under way, including Lydia Ball, Beth Gayler, Allison Gray, Lance Kirk, Randy Lavigne, Jay Nichols, Tom Perrigo, Scot Rutledge, Deacon Taylor, Ned Thomas and Pam Vilkin. These folks are truly outstanding citizens who consistently go above and beyond to help make Nevada a better place for all.

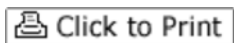
Programs like HomeFree Nevada are important to our future for many reasons and its future success lies in the participation and cooperation of everyone involved. Whether you're looking for a green job or a way to improve your home's value and efficiency, HomeFree Nevada is something to consider.

For more information about HomeFree Nevada, visit [www.homefreenevada.org](http://www.homefreenevada.org) or call Lazareck at 451-8630.

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