

Illinois employs over 120,000 clean energy jobs, approaching nearly five percent growth

By MELISSA CROCKETT MESKE
macmeske@ibjonline.com

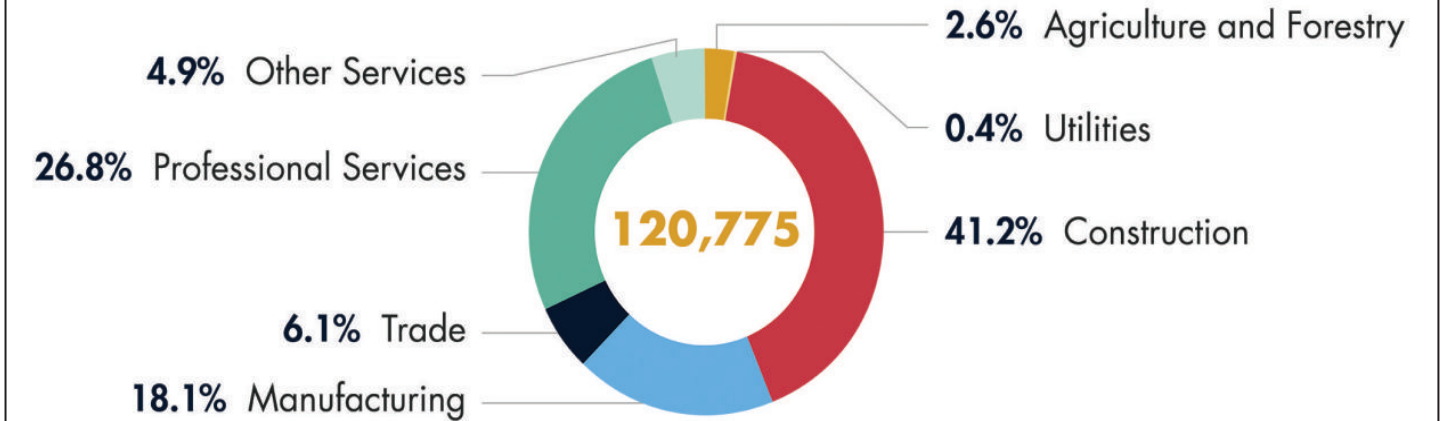
According to a new analysis of employment data released in 4th Quarter 2022 by the national, nonpartisan business group E2 (Environmental Entrepreneurs) and nonprofit Evergreen Climate Innovations, clean energy businesses in Illinois added more than 5,600 workers in 2021, now employing 120,775 Illinoisans across the state.

The report was released just as Congress and the Biden administration passed the largest investment in climate and clean energy in history, set to boost clean energy jobs and businesses across the country.

More Illinoisans are now working in clean energy than the number of lawyers, accountants and auditors, web developers, and real estate agents in the state combined. “Illinois has really been a leader in the clean energy process,” noted E2 Midwest Advocate Micaela Preskill during a virtual press conference held at the time of the report’s release.

According to *Clean Jobs Midwest 2022*, a mild downturn in Illinois clean energy jobs was evident in 2020 but was followed by a nearly 5 percent uptick in 2021. The job growth in 2021 was credited in the report as being driven by advanced transporta-

Illinois Clean Energy Jobs by Sector at 2021 Year End



Source: *Clean Jobs Midwest*

tion, which added more than 2,970 jobs and now employs 13,668 workers statewide. Hybrid, plug-in hybrid and electric-vehicle sector jobs accounted for most of the sector’s growth.

The biggest sector of the Illinois clean energy industry is energy efficiency, representing over 68 percent of the state’s clean energy workforce. Well over 82,000 energy efficiency workers in Illinois are currently employed in the manufacture of ENERGY STAR-rated appliances, the installation of efficient lighting, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, and the installation of advanced building materials in residential and commercial buildings.

According to the analysis, the energy efficiency sector continued to lead clean energy in total jobs in 2021 followed by renewable energy (18,095 jobs) and advanced transportation (13,668 jobs). Meanwhile, advanced transportation saw the fastest job growth across clean energy (28 percent), followed by clean fuels (6 percent). Solar energy jobs grew by 10.2 percent to 6,087 workers.

In fact, clean energy occupations accounted for 22 percent of all construction jobs and 4 percent of all manufacturing jobs in Illinois. Small businesses drive Illinois’s clean energy sector – in 2021, 71 percent of the state’s clean energy businesses had less than 20

employees. Also noted was that veterans make up approximately 9 percent of the state’s clean energy workforce.

Preskill said, “With the IRA [Inflation Reduction Act] investing billions into the clean energy sector in the coming years, these jobs are set to grow at an unprecedented rate. Illinois stands to benefit as the industry builds off its strong foundation with clean energy workers calling home in every corner of the Midwest. With policies that support strong wages, equity, and workforce training, a transformation to a cleaner economy that boosts the state’s entire economy is within reach.”

Presenters noted that, despite the recent growth, clean energy jobs still have significant room to grow in Illinois. With billions in funds from the IRA to be invested nationwide, the state has an enormous opportunity to create tens of thousands more jobs in the coming years. To see the full potential of job and emission reduction benefits from the Inflation Reduction Act, state and federal coordination is still needed. Policies that remove barriers to clean energy development like the development of workforce training programs and expansion of transmission infrastructure are also critical.

Clean energy employment grew 5 percent nationwide to reach 3.2 million jobs. The Midwest also saw clean energy jobs increase by 5 percent, a rate faster than overall employment growth in the region. The 12-state Midwest region is now home to over 714,000 clean energy jobs.

Managing Director Ian Adams of Evergreen Climate Innovations said, “The clean energy workforce is a large and growing part of the Midwest region’s economy. Looking forward, we are excited for the potential for this industry to grow even more robustly following the passage of impactful federal legislation including the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act.”

The *Clean Jobs Midwest 2022* report is the seventh produced by E2 and Evergreen Climate Innovations (formerly Clean Energy Trust) based on analysis of the U.S. Department of Energy’s annual US Energy Employment & Jobs Report (USEER) by the BW Research Partnership.

The USEER analyzes data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) to track employment across many energy production, transmission and distribution subsectors. In addition, the 2022 USEER relies on a unique supplemental survey of 33,000 business representatives across the United States.

To learn more about the Midwest’s clean energy industry, visit www.cleanjobsmidwest.com.

MidAmerica Airport adopts incentive program to encourage new destination additions

By RANDY PIERCE
tribune@heraldpubs.com

In order to allow MidAmerica St. Louis Airport to grow and continue to thrive as a location for passenger flight service, the St. Clair County Public Building Commission has approved the adoption of an incentive program designed to encourage the addition of new destinations.

As recommended by the director of the airport, Bryan Johnson, with support from Jack Penning a consultant with a company called Volaire Aviation which is based in Portland, Oregon, the program has two basic objectives as outlined in the materials associated with it that were approved by the PBC: to add non-stop service between BLV (the aviation terminology used to describe this airport because of its proximity to Belleville) and currently unserved markets and to make BLV a desirable airport for low-cost and ultra-low-cost airlines.

This incentive program is not entirely new as the original version of it focused only on domestic flights within the United States but the most recently adopted scenario calls for the addition of international flights, something which is on the horizon for BLV and has been talked about for the past couple of years as a result of an agreement forged between its primary passenger carrier, Allegiant, and one that provides service to destinations in Mexico.

Among the comments from Penning concerning this matter when it was discussed was one where he stated, “Anything less than this program and we’re not competitive (with other airports).”

As featured in this program, an incentive for an airline can be any

fee reduction for servicing a specific airport, a fee waiver, or for the airport to allow the use of its revenue by an airline for promotional expenses.

The incentive packages concerning international destinations are broken down into what are referred to as short-haul and long-haul categories, both year-round and seasonally, to new destinations. Those providing year-round service qualify with at least one departure per week while the seasonal service concerns any that does not operate for at least 48 weeks during its first year of operation out of BLV but still offers at least one flight per week during those times it is in service.

Short-haul flights are classified as those which operate non-stop from BLV to other areas of North America and Central America including the Caribbean with up to three destinations in Mexico anticipated to be the first of these involving the St. Clair County airport. Long-haul flights are considered to be those anywhere else in the world.

For the international year-round service, in the short-haul category, the county, as owner and operator of the airport, will provide \$100,000 for marketing and advertising during the first 12 months it takes place at BLV then \$75,000 for the second year. For the short-haul seasonal flights, the incentive for marketing and advertising is \$75,000 for the first year and \$50,000 for the second.

In the case of long-haul flights scheduled to reach new destinations, using the same basic criteria, the marketing and advertising support has been set at \$150,000 for the first year and \$100,000 for the following year.

For the seasonal long-haul carriers, again not operating for at least 48 weeks during the first year but offering a minimum of once-a-week departures during the times they are in use, the county’s incentive is set at \$100,000 for year one and \$75,000 the following year.

For domestic flights on any new route that is offered for the entire 12 months on the calendar, the carrier will be receiving \$100,000 for marketing and advertising the first year while providing \$50,000 for the same purpose during the first year for seasonally operated routes provided that they are offered at least 12 weeks, both being required to have flights at least once a week.

Stipulated in the incentive program agreements is that the advertising and marketing must contain the name of MidAmerica St. Louis Airport and specify the new route. The airport reserves the right to approve all such marketing materials for the service provided to qualify for the incentive reimbursement or the county can create the advertising itself if both parties agree on it.

Further offered as an incentive to attract flights to new destinations from BLV is a 100 percent pro-rated landing fee waiver plus 100 percent waivers of terminal space rental and aircraft apron parking space charges. These fee waivers are good for 730 consecutive calendar days or, in the case of seasonal service, the first two seasons of it.

Airlines providing services to destinations already served by BLV cannot qualify for the incentives. The PBC’s legal counsel, Bernie Ysursa, had reviewed the incentive program prior to its passage.