



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on November 28, 2011

“Green” Jobs and Real Jobs

The reality is that no matter how much of other people’s money the President throws at the “clean” renewable alternative energy sector to force it to generate jobs, his efforts have been an abysmal failure. The name Solyndra is now synonymous with “loser” and the *Washington Post* reported last month that Obama’s green loan program of \$38 billion has created just 3,500 jobs in two years instead of the 65,000 anticipated by the White House.



Instead, real jobs are being created in the real energy industry — in Pennsylvania, North Dakota, Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma. In the first six months of this year, 18,000 new jobs were created in the natural gas business in Pennsylvania, with more than 200,000 jobs existing there today where none existed 10 years ago. Overall, the *Journal* reported that “oil and gas production ... now employs some 440,000 workers, an 80% increase, or 200,000 jobs, since 2003. Oil and gas jobs account for more than one in five of all net new private jobs in that period.”

The oil boom in North Dakota continues to set records. [In August](#), oil production was 225,000 barrels a day, up from just 3,000 a day in 2005. But that’s old news: It’s now [440,000 barrels a day](#) and growing rapidly. In the year 2000, fewer than 4,000 workers were employed in North Dakota’s oil industry. Today the number is 18,000, and is expected to reach 30,000 by the year 2020.

The Bakken Formation “is the largest oil field we’ve found in North America in the last 40 years,” according to Bud Brigham, CEO of Brigham Exploration. “It’s more than 15 billion barrels — it may be the biggest oil field found in America ever.” Rick Muncrief, senior VP for Continental, agrees: “In a couple of years, the Williston Basin will surpass the oil production out of Prudhoe Bay, Alaska. Where we are today we can generate really solid returns [with oil priced] at 65 to 70 dollars a barrel.”

Rep. Rick Berg (R-N.D.) told [TheHill.com](#) that “we have 18,000 jobs looking for people,” noting that “if our country’s GDP grew at 7 percent, as it does in [my] state, most of our problems would be over in two years.” As a state representative, Berg was instrumental in improving the business environment at the same time that new technologies were being developed to gain access to North Dakota’s Bakken Formation, presenting a free-market opportunity to both entrepreneurs and those out of work. Berg said such improvements came by cutting corporate taxes, deregulating several industries by “getting rid of barriers that didn’t have any common sense,” and forcing the state government to stay within its



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budget.

People are moving to North Dakota [in such numbers](#) that there are now housing shortages and traffic jams. Rents are sky-high but so are salaries: Taco John's in Williston, the geographic center of the Williston Basin, just recently raised its pay from \$8.50 to \$15 an hour in order to compete with the Subway's and Hardee's down the street. General Manager Christie Smith told CNN that they have 15 positions open, and she has turned down only one applicant this year "because he just looked too scruffy."

Vickie McMullen and her husband were barely making ends meet where they lived in North Carolina, so when they saw what was happening in North Dakota, they pulled up stakes and moved. She now works as a nanny in exchange for free rent while her husband is working in the oil fields making \$1,600 a week — or nearly \$80,000 a year. Said McMullen,

We want to be debt-free, so we came here to play catch-up. But when I came here, I thought I was on Mars. It's just so crazy that the rest of the country has no jobs, and here's this one place that doesn't have enough people to fill all the jobs.

Nathan Pittman moved from Indiana to [Watford](#), in the center of the state, where he immediately landed a job at a trucking company paying him \$20 an hour, with lots of overtime. His salary doubled to about \$2,200 a week. Said Pittman, "You can make at least a thousand dollars a week more here than anywhere else in the country. There's not a business you can start in North Dakota right now that wouldn't make it."

Steve Williams owned a construction company in Montana but lost his home to foreclosure and moved to Watford as well. Now, he says, "I have more work than I know what to do with. I look at it like the Gold Rush." Watford's population was 1,570 in last year's census; today it is over 5,000.

And so the stories continue: The happy intersection of geography, technology, opportunity, and minimal government interference is the foundation for the boom in North Dakota and elsewhere. What's most amazing, and reassuring, is that these folks aren't being coerced into taking these positions. They are simply taking advantage of the opportunities the free market will always provide, if it is allowed to. No force-feeding, no government "investing," no subsidies from Washington.

The *Journal* is right:

Mr. Obama keeps talking about "green jobs" as if repetition would conjure them. He'd do more for the economy if he dropped the ideological illusions and embraced the job-creating, wealth-producing reality of domestic fossil fuels.



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