

California missing out on green manufacturing jobs

By Anne Gonzales, Sacramento Bee

When solar technology company SMA America was looking for a place to put its headquarters, Rocklin was a logical choice. California, after all, represents more than 40 percent of the national market for solar installations.

When it came to choosing a place to manufacture its solar and wind inverters, however, the firm went to Denver.

“Denver offered a good mix of affordable buildings, access to skilled labor, a convenient distribution infrastructure and an overall attractive and supportive business climate,” said Jurgen Krehnke, president and general manager of SMA America.

California leads the nation in encouraging renewable energy. Taxpayers and electricity customers dish out more than half a billion dollars a year to subsidize green power, spurring thousands of jobs in research, sales, design and installation.

But the state is missing out on a richer vein of jobs in green manufacturing, as companies go out of state or leave the country in search of lower costs and government incentives.

The state boasts the highest number of green technology patents, 450 registered between 2007 and 2009, according to a recent state Senate report. California captured 57 percent of the \$4.9 billion in venture capital funding invested in clean technology nationwide in 2011.

Read the whole story