

Green-collar careers



PHOTO COURTESY OF STANDARD RENEWABLE ENERGY

A worker prepares to install a solar panel. Although not clearly defined, green-collar jobs are said to encompass all positions within a 'green' company.

BY CASEY WOOTEN
 HOUSTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

When Jordan Fruge and John Berger set out in 2006 to start their own company, they also had a higher purpose in mind.

"We recognized that there was a tremendous opportunity and we wanted to build a company that could make renewable services more attainable," says Fruge, senior vice president of business develop-

ment for Houston-based Standard Renewable Energy.

The timing seemed just right, and like many other companies in "green" industries, Standard Renewable Energy has experienced tremendous growth. In three years, the company's payroll has rocketed from two to 260 employees.

Those workers are part of a new subset of

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Fields of Green

**Steve Madden, senior VP
 StarTex Power**

My company: StarTex Power works to develop products that provide customers with the best opportunity to maximize savings while allowing them to participate in environmentally conscious initiatives. The StarTex Power green plan offers consumers and businesses the opportunity to consume power from renewable energy sources, allowing them to reduce their carbon footprint and help sustain and protect the environment.

The down side: At times, it's possible to focus too narrowly on the intricate details of a project rather than long-term goals and strategies. Personally, I enjoy focusing on the long-term and searching for better ways to serve our customers.

The future: Right now, the ERCOT (Electric Reliability Council of Texas) market is going through a complete redesign that will change the way power is bought and sold.

Home and hobbies: I live in the West University area of Houston, very close to the StarTex Power home office. I am truly passionate about reading and learning new things — most recently, I've been focusing on expanding my knowledge of wines and consider myself to be an aspiring oenophile.

Little-known fact: I have a severe addiction to dark chocolate — which isn't helping me win the StarTex Power "Biggest Loser" competition.



**Randhir Sahni, president
 Llewelyn-Davies Sahni Inc.**

My work: As president of an architectural planning and design firm, I am involved in the day-to-day project work and progress, setting the direction of the effort for the team, based on the scope of work.

How I make a difference: We attempt to understand the client's attitude about acceptability of change toward a higher level of "green" improvements. We discuss the need for change and its cost/benefits initially and over the life of the improvements. This exercise allows us to establish a level of commitment to the green component of the project. Every component of the project is then examined to establish sustainability goals and concepts to be implemented during the design process.

The down side: I consider my job as that of a visionary responsible for seeing the big picture. Having to deal with the tedious day-to-day aspects of running the firm sometimes goes against my nature.

The future: I believe there will be a greater overlap of disciplines of architecture, planning, design, delivery and capital funding for projects. Architects will need to become multifaceted, offering to deliver to their clients a living, breathing facility rather than a construction documentation package for use by the client.

Home and hobbies: City of Piney Point Village. Hobbies include golf, economics and investments, and people-watching.



**Matt Delnick, chief financial officer
 Greenstar North America**

My company: Greenstar, based in Houston, is the largest recycler in Texas, as well as the fastest-growing recycling company nationwide.

How I make a difference: As CFO, I am also responsible for showing customers — and our company — that going green can be a successful business enterprise. We encourage municipalities, businesses and individual residents throughout Texas to recycle more, making a significant impact on the pollution levels in Texas.

The down side: Last year, the commodity market crashed along with the overall economy. Recycling programs that were profiting from the high commodity prices were hurt. We felt the frustration of our customers during this period and worked to create programs that will be sustainable through the ups and downs of the market.

The future: Our segment will likely experience much change in the coming 12 months, both in relation to continued progression of technology and in consolidation. We also believe that our national and local governments will continue to pass legislation around renewable energy and further elimination of landfill waste. It is also an exciting time for recycling in Houston. The City of Houston is piloting its automated curbside recycling program and will hopefully expand these services throughout the city.

Home and hobbies: I live in the Galleria area close to our headquarters. My time away from work is spent with my four children, on the golf course or coaching youth sports.

