

How Ariz. created or saved 15,000 jobs by accident

Dear Editor,

The precise number may be less or may be much more, but I say at least 15,000 jobs inadvertently have been saved or created here in Arizona. Want to know how?

Arizonans are saving energy and water. Local school districts are going green and redirecting the saved money to teachers and classrooms. South Mountain High School is saving tens of thousands of dollars each quarter by retrofitting some of the lighting on campus. Take a walk through some local businesses — many new lights are CFLs, and there are motion sensors preventing them from shining unless someone is there to see it. More and more homes are doing the same.

An officer of an Arizona utility company tells me demand has declined 5 percent for residential power. This suggests that if the money isn't going to the utility company, it's probably making its way back into the economy — saving or creating jobs through the increased purchase of good and services.

Extrapolating the energy demand numbers across all 2.6 million households in Arizona, more than \$500 million a year now is being injected into the state's

economy. The science of determining job creation is pretty arcane. However, by my rough estimates, as Arizona has gone green, it accidentally has created or saved 15,000 jobs. This excludes jobs that were created through power company incentives to buy energy-efficient appliances, but only through money redirected from utility bills. These are not green jobs that require special training. Instead, these are jobs at the local supermarket, barber shop or anyplace we spend our discretionary cash.

Now that we know, why don't we "go green for jobs" on purpose? Thanks to the Arizona Corporation Commission's energy conservation mandates and "go green" programs spreading across the state, the regulatory and social framework already is in place.

The results of the last election suggest the economy is front of mind for all Arizonans. I suggest going green for jobs is a viable, bottom-up, low-risk and low-cost solution that can help every Arizona family. Our leaders should look into this option.

**George Brooks Jr., owner
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