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Sencera leads the way for solar energy

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CHARLOTTE, NC (WBTV) - Charlotte's not the place you'd think of when you think of solar power, but in a huge warehouse on the city's west side, at Sencera, they're building the next generation of solar panels.

The start-up company uses ordinary glass you'd see in a car. They use high-tech machines to lay films of plasma on glass to make thin film silicon solar panels. It's extremely unique in the industry, but it uses the same technology that you see in a solar calculator.

"We know that the state or the country that really gets this right in terms of renewable energy, manufacturing is really going to lead a lot of the economic indicators going forward," Sencera employee Joel Olsen explained.

The company did the research and development, and will begin making the panels later this year. Sencera is a poster child of the companies Charlotte leaders want to go after.

The Pew Center study "The Clean Energy Economy" predicts that green jobs will take off in the next century. North Carolina Gov. Beverly Perdue voiced as much in a speech last April.

"Let me be straight with you. Green is gold," she said. "Green is gold in North Carolina and in America, and I believe and I'll say it again, the state that gets green right in America will own the next 50 years of this century."

But it's not strictly limited to green says Jeff Edge, senior VP of economic development at the Charlotte Chamber. The city's positioning itself to be a major player in the nuclear industry as well, attracted by Duke Energy's presence.

"Everybody's wanting to come here because that's where the talent's going to be." Edge commented.

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