Recognized globally as a location of choice for solar energy activities, Southern Arizona’s emerging solar industry promises a bright future. The region has valuable resources for technology development, manufacturing and solar power generation.

Pima Community College’s Get Into Energy program includes Electrical Utility and Natural Gas Technology Courses designed to meet industry needs. Linking energy-related courses to industry standards and operator qualifications ensures a strong and capable work force for the renewable industry.

Copper mining has been a major industry for Arizona since the 19th century. Sixty percent of the nation’s copper comes from Southern Arizona. The copper mined in the region is sold principally outside of the state, bringing money into our economy. Southern Arizona is home to a number of technology-related mining companies whose products service mines world-wide.

**BY THE NUMBERS**

Companies ........................................... 50+
Employees ........................................... 7,000+

1st Line Supervisors of Construction
Trades & Extraction Workers ............... 1,920
Operating Engineers ........................... 1,110
Solar Photovoltaic Installers ............... 62

Graduates (University of Arizona and Arizona State University)
Electrical Engineering ....................... 699
Schools of Mining, Geological Engineering, and Earth & Space Exploration ........... 101

Major Employers

- ASARCO
- Atlas CopCo
- CAID Industries
- Caterpillar Surface Mining & Technology
- Freeport McMoRan Inc.
- General Plasma
- Global Solar
- Hexagon Mining
- Modular Mining
- Schletter, Inc.
- SOLON Corporation
Much of the nation’s mining technology research is done in Tucson in association with The University of Arizona. The University of Arizona Department of Mining and Geological Engineering offers a BS in Mining Engineering. There are several tracks for this degree, such as sustainable resource development, mine operations, geomechanics and geological engineering.

Caterpillar Inc., the world’s leading manufacturer of construction and mining equipment, recently selected Tucson, Ariz., as the new location for its surface mining and technology offices. The Tucson facility will create more than 600 projected new jobs over five years, with employees in executive management, engineering, product development and support positions. Caterpillar has had a more than 70-year presence in the state, and its Tucson Proving Ground and Tinaja Hills Demonstration Center locations currently have a workforce of approximately 300 people.

Founded in 1979 and headquartered in Tucson, AZ, Modular Mining Systems, Inc. developed, demonstrated, and brought to market the DISPATCH fleet management system. With custom hardware and software, this technology optimized the assignment of trucks to loading and dumping points in an open pit mine and produced operating reports during the shift. Using the DISPATCH system as a springboard for further innovation, Modular went on to develop the IntelliMine suite.

Hexagon Mining is shaping smart change by helping to connect all parts of a mine with technologies that make sense of data in real time. Hexagon brings surveying, design, fleet management, production optimization, and collision avoidance together in a life-of-mine solution that connects people and processes. Hexagon recently announced a doubling of their workforce which will equate to 260 employees based in Tucson.

Lowell Institute for Mineral Resources - University of Arizona

This is the only research institute in the United States with the depth of expertise to tackle challenges critically important to modern mining – then bring game-changing solutions to market by training industry professionals through onsite courses, field training and distance learning. More than 200 university researchers collaborate across 27 disciplines on pioneering projects to advance sustainable development of mineral resources. This institute partners with industry experts around the globe and has educated professionals in 27 countries to improve management across the entire mining cycle.

I think the biggest single thing Tucson did was demonstrate a tremendous partnership across all levels of the different organizations involved - from the state, to the city, to the county, to Sun Corridor Inc., to the Rio Nuevo team. They were very flexible and very welcoming in terms of how they engaged.

~ Tom Bluth, Vice President, Caterpillar Surface Mining & Technology Division
Solar and Renewable Resources

Recognized globally as a location of choice for solar energy activities, Tucson’s early industry success and solar assets promise a bright future. The region has valuable resources for technology development, manufacturing and solar power generation. Tucson was named Arizona’s first “Solar America City” with the U.S. Department of Energy’s 2007 inaugural award.

Solar Zone at UA Tech Park

The Solar Zone is one of a number of “innovation hubs” at the UA Tech Park. Ten companies and organizations test and demonstrate a variety of solar technologies and systems. The site is designed to generate 25 megawatts of power, which is nearly twice the daily electrical consumption of the Tech Park and enough to power the homes of more than 4,600 Tucson Electric Power residential consumers for a year. Here, researchers and companies work together to evaluate how these technologies perform side-by-side under identical operating conditions.

The Solar Zone at the UA Tech Park is one of the largest multi-technology solar demonstration sites in the United States. The first-of-its-kind solar-centric research park integrates:

- Power generation and distribution
- Research and development
- Assembly and manufacturing
- Product development
- Testing and evaluation
- Workforce training
- Public educational outreach and demonstration

(Source: UA Tech Parks)

#3 in U.S. Solar Employment

In 2014 the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA), in partnership with The Solar Foundation, ranked Arizona #3 nationwide in solar employment, with an estimated 9,200 jobs employed at 396 solar companies. In fact, Arizona accounts for approximately 4.5% of the nation’s total employment in the solar industry and consistently ranks as a top state for photovoltaic energy generation.

SEIA also reports that Arizona has the second most installed solar electrical watts per capita and the second-highest solar energy capacity in the United States, with enough solar energy installed in the state to power 304,000 homes. (Source: Arizona Commerce Authority).
The collective assets of Southern Arizona, combined with Mexico’s economic growth, lead to a strategic location and unique competitive strength for business growth and development found nowhere else. The Southern Arizona/Sonoran region, is a binational, world-class center in integrated research, manufacturing and supply chain strength.

The Tucson MSA serves a market of 35 million people within a 500-mile radius. In terms of geography, it lies within 415 miles of Southern California population centers and within 64 miles of the Mexican border, Arizona’s largest trade partner.

Proximity to the I-10 / I-8 (east/west) and I-19 (north/south) interstate highway system provides timely access to suppliers and markets in other southern states. Additionally four international ports of entry, the region’s rail/truck intermodal (Port of Tucson), 11 general aviation airports across several counties and Tucson’s international airport facilities provide supplementary, highly-efficient methods for people and product movement.

Businesses regard Southern Arizona as an emerging location of choice for many important reasons including:

- A diverse workforce and skill set availability
- No corporate inventory tax
- Arizona’s designation as a right to work state
- Focused incentives for jobs and capital investment
- Availability and affordability of land, water and electricity
- Competitive operational and payroll costs

About Sun Corridor Inc.

Sun Corridor Inc. is a transformative economic development organization representing one of the most dynamic and growing major business centers in North America. Located in Southern Arizona and encompassing four counties (Pinal, Pima, Santa Cruz and Cochise), Sun Corridor Inc. is a CEO-driven regional alliance whose members aggressively champion mega-regional issues that impact economic competitiveness and quality of life. The organization has helped to drive significant business investment into the Tucson and Southern Arizona region through primary job creation, resulting in an economic impact of $18.7 billion.

WHAT CAN SUN CORRIDOR INC. OFFER YOU?

To learn more about doing business here, contact:

Susan Hyatt Dumon
520.243.1950
susan.dumon@suncorridorinc.com

Daniela Gallagher
520.243.1938
daniela.gallagher@suncorridorinc.com

© Sun Corridor Inc. 2017