

Going green could add plenty of green to investors' wallets.

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As part of the first Green Leaders Week presented by Eco Investment Network International Inc., Envision Solar hosted a panel discussion July 22 that included an array of green energy's movers and shakers.

A crowd of 75 gathered in Envision's La Jolla office to focus on ways to educate potential investors about renewable energy, how far the industry has come and how far it has to go, says Yeves Perez, co-founder of the local Eco Investment Club. Eco Investment Network International is the parent company of the club.

Bob Noble, chairman and chief executive officer of Envision, a founding sponsor of the club, says that the way Californians use, produce and distribute energy is changing, but more importantly, it has to change.

"All of the people involved with Green Leaders Week are exactly that: Leaders, people who are doing things and not just consultants," said Noble, who is also co-founder and chairman of the local Eco Investment Club.

Last year, venture capitalists invested almost \$4 billion in green technologies. That was a 38 percent increase from the \$2.9 billion invested in 2006, according to Cleantech Group LLC, formerly called the Cleantech Venture Network, which tracks venture capital investments in environmentally friendly technologies.

Green Leaders Week speakers included John Bohn, commissioner for the California Public Utilities Commission; Paul Hannam, president of Bright Green Leadership Inc.; Blair Reynolds, system designer and project developer for Sequoia Solar; and Jay Potter, CEO at GreenCore Capital.

Potter says that investors in renewable energy should expect a three- to five-year window for returns, but

those with the vision and patience to invest in green will reap substantial rewards.

"The overwhelming response to the Envision panels proves that San Diegans are hungry for information on going green, because these issues affect.., everything we consume, live in, drive, buy, borrow and invest in," said Potter.

Hannam said the environment is increasingly being seen as a "potential value-add," rather than a cost to be minimized.

"Green leaders are emerging throughout companies, not just in the environmental departments," Hannam said.

He says that success stories are moving beyond hybrid vehicles and organic foods, so that eventually, green will be seen as a standard part of the marketplace.

While Noble says incredible transitions have occurred in sustainable design and projects since he entered the industry 20 years ago, progress only came because people pushed.

"Now is the time to continue that pushing from a business side, an investment side and a public policy side, and we should not let up until the public receives a sound energy policy," Noble said.