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Energy, environmental advisers emerging as regs evolve

Experts in demand as policy matrix becomes increasingly muddled

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As the carrots and sticks surrounding sustainable energy initiatives become more numerous and complex, a growing number of local advisory firms are promoting their expertise in navigating the green sector's economic and public-policy waters.

For example, Boston-based **EnerNOC Inc.** has begun advising existing customers on energy procurement issues. Earlier this month the company purchased Baltimore energy-procurement consulting firm **South River Consulting LLC** for approximately \$4.8 million.

EnerNOC's primary business involves the installation and management of a technology that enables building owners to minimize their energy usage. The company's segue into other energy-consulting services is part of its long-term strategy to be a one-stop services shop for energy users.

EnerNOC says the acquisition was spurred by a vacuum of expertise in managing how companies purchase power.

"When we start providing them visibility into the demand side, they inevitably look to us to provide more opportunities to save money," said EnerNOC CEO **Tim Healy**. "Because of what we do we become a de-facto energy expert."

It's a plan that's resonating with oth-

er players in the space, too.

For companies with expertise in the nitty-gritty aspects of sustainable projects — from strategic planning and grant writing to permitting and marketing — the opportunities to parlay that knowledge into fast-growing green-consulting businesses are numerous.

And insiders say the green trend's economic and branding advantages have boosted demand for outside parties that can shape and execute green

strategies for big, deep-pocketed institutions.

Locally, government officials are reporting a jump in the number of third-party professionals representing companies seeking clean-tech and related energy grants.

"We've been dealing with people in general cases that have relevant experience in energy," said **Warren Leon**, director of the **Massachusetts Technology Collaborative's** renewable energy trust. "But I think it depends on the project.

If a company wants to put up a solar panel, they should be able to do it without a consultant."

John DeVillars is a prime example of the kinds of people gravitating to this space.

The state's former environmental chief and a partner at Boston's **BlueWave Strategies LLC**, DeVillars specializes in project management, financing and securing regulatory approvals for



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BlueWave Strategies partner John DeVillars, the state's former environmental chief, is one of the area's growing number of clean-tech and energy-policy consultants.

ADVISERS: Help is on the way

clients, mostly developers.

He said current events, on a global scale, are driving much of the buzz locally. "You can almost track interest in renewables on the price of oil."

Some of these "experts" hail from fairly mundane industries. Boston-based **SourceOne Inc.**'s expertise is in combined heat and power systems for businesses, although it recently started advising clients about broader energy topics.

Demand from clients, seeking clarity amid all of the green noise, drove SourceOne's expansion.

"Capacity and reliability issues have, over the last 36 months, moved from the electrical supply market to the end user," said SourceOne Vice President **Tom Galvin**. "More companies are realizing that managing their power supply is one of the major opportunities to make an impact on their sustainability agenda."

Other consulting firms are taking on the more strategic aspects of green planning.

The Cadmus Group, a consultancy in Watertown has carved out a niche by helping companies identify cost-effective equipment and processes to boost sustainability.

The company, an energy and environmental consulting firm, has also dipped its toes into the carbon management market and providing energy-usage analysis.



43%

... of the state's clean-tech jobs specialize in energy efficiency

— The Mass. Tech Collaborative

"It's more than just PR," said **Jane Obbagy**, vice president at Cadmus. "It's figuring out if you have the basic aspects in place to take advantage of the sustainable programs out there."

Private sector consultants are not the only ones getting a piece of the action, either. The Massachusetts Technology

Collaborative offers advice on a slew of renewable energy and usage strategies, and the quasi-public lending and advisory firm **MassDevelopment** has a specific program to enable clean-tech businesses to expand in Massachusetts, too.

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