Montville woman helps businesses become green

By SALLY SILVERMAN
SPECIAL TO THE DAILY RECORD

MONTVILLE — Dr. Jeana Wirtenberg is founder of Transitioning to Green, a professional membership organization dedicated to the green transformation and comprised of leaders in sustainability, industry, academia and organizational leadership. Together, they seek to help organizations utilize human resources in recruiting and training the talent needed to effect the transition to the green economy.

She also is co-founder and senior adviser at the Institute for Sustainable Enterprise in the Silberman College of Business at Fairleigh Dickinson University and lead editor of the book “The Sustainable Enterprise Fieldbook: When It All Comes Together.”

“Everything I write and speak about is about people, the planet and profits,” Wirtenberg said.

GREEN JOBS: “In New Jersey, there are more than 100 jobs in every field that could be transferred into green,” she said.

Her website www.transitioningtogreen.com lists jobs ranging from quality control, engineering, sales and transportation in the fields of chemistry, electricity and water.

“An example of a job in the corporate world would be chief sustainable officer to a green-team leader in municipal government,” she said. “For example, Covanta Energy and PSEG have openings, and the government has green jobs on O’Net,” she said. “There are green job banks in the IT field – the whole telecommunications field is going green. As far as the field of finance, in the future, people will have to be accountable for emissions.”

A Transitioning to Green Careers certification program, co-sponsored by the Institute for Sustainable Enterprise, is being offered at the Petroversi College of Continuing Studies at FDU.

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Dr. Jeana Wirtenberg, founder, Transitioning to Green, Montville

THE GOVERNMENT AND GREEN: “The government has good intentions, but there are institutional barriers, fragmentation and a disconnect in communications. Obama has good intentions and has done a few good things but, given the state of the economy, we should be fostering our energy on this. I’m trying to work with the government to keep businesses in New Jersey,” she said.

BEGINNINGS: Wirtenberg was born in Brooklyn and grew up in New York City.

“When I was 5, I knew I wanted to get a Ph.D., although I don’t think I knew what it was,” she said. Wirtenberg received a bachelor’s degree in math with a minor in psychology from the City College of New York and a master’s degree and Ph.D. in psychology from UCLA.

“I’ve always been a change agent to make the world better. I love knowledge and learning,” she said.

CAREER PATH: Wirtenberg’s first job was with the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, which helped her complete her dissertation on Title IX. She was HR director at Public Service Enterprise Group and held positions in marketing and human resources at AT&T for 13 years.

AT HOME: Wirtenberg lives in Montville with her husband, Bill. She has a son, Justin, 20, and Bill has a son, Spencer, 20. Her mother, Pearl, also lives with them. Wirtenberg loves to dance and travel to such places as Quebec City and the Caribbean.

MENTOR: Chuck Nakamura, who was chairman of the clinical psychology department at UCLA and to whom Wirtenberg dedicated her book.