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# Metro Denver EDC calls 2011 'encouraging' for priority industry clusters

Denver Business Journal by Heather Draper, Reporter

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The Front Range economy may have turned the corner last year, based on employment data in a new Metro Denver Economic Development Corp. report released Wednesday.

Seven industry clusters or subclusters posted positive employment growth last year, compared with only the clean-tech subsector showing growth in 2010.

"Adding employment across multiple industries is the encouraging news we've been hoping for," [Tom Clark](#), CEO of the Metro Denver EDC, said in a statement. "These results make those of us in economic development keenly aware of the importance of using a diversified industry cluster approach in our marketing efforts."

The Metro Denver EDC is focusing its economic development activities on eight industry clusters — aerospace, aviation, bioscience, broadcasting and telecommunications, energy, financial services, health care and wellness, and information technology-software.

The seventh annual Industry Cluster Study ([download here](#)) was done by Metro Denver EDC's chief economist, [Patty Silverstein](#), of Littleton-based Development Research Partners.

In aerospace, metro Denver is first among the 50 largest metros for total private aerospace workers with 19,500 people employed at aerospace companies. The sector showed 1.7 percent employment growth in 2011 from the year before, and has seen 11.9 percent

employment growth since 2006.

The Metro Denver EDC added the health care and wellness cluster as a new industry for inclusion in the study this year. With 169,150 workers dispersed throughout a nine-county region in metro Denver and northern Colorado, the industry posted the largest job growth — 9.5 percent — of the eight industry clusters.

"This industry emerged as a new cluster because of its high overall impact on our region's economy," Clark said. "Plus, we recognize that our healthy community is a major part of our brand, and is an incredible asset to economic development."

Other clusters or subsectors that showed year-over-year growth in 2011 were medical devices, fossil energy, clean-tech, investments and IT-software.

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