

Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski joined officials from electronics giant Sanyo in Salem Monday to help open a solar cell plant. It's the same place the governor visited a year ago to celebrate the plant's ground-breaking.

A lot has changed since then, as Chris Lehman reports.

Last fall, when Governor Kulongoski shoveled a ceremonial pile of dirt at the Sanyo facility in Salem, the state's unemployment rate stood at 7.2 percent.

Almost exactly a year later, the Governor stood on the same ground to help cut a ceremonial ribbon, as production of solar cell components kicks off.

Over that period Oregon's unemployment rate soared past 12 percent, and the state hemorrhaged 92,000 jobs.

Kulongoski said the 200 jobs this plant will provide are badly needed.

Ted Kulongoski: "In this difficult economic time, it is refreshing to have a positive story to tell."

The Governor said the jobs come courtesy of the state's tax credit program for renewable energy companies. Critics point out it's costing the state millions of dollars of tax revenue.

Kulongoski vetoed a legislative attempt to roll back the tax credit.

BY CHRIS LEHMAN