

Excerpt from Monterey Herald, August 21, 2007

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## **Greenbacks in green investing**

### **Investment funds likely to grow**

By FRANK NORTON

McClatchy Newspapers

RALEIGH, N.C. — Green is good. At least that's the bet of an increasing number of investment fund managers, retirees and armchair stock pickers who are pouring billions into so-called green stocks, and not necessarily for the love of nature.

They're chasing lucrative returns from companies that promise new ways to recycle, power automobiles and harness the wind and sun. Many have had success.

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Priming the pump are rising concerns over global warming, higher energy prices and shrinking natural resources. Companies of all sizes and many consumers are rushing to embrace environmentally friendly practices and products. And tougher environmental laws will force further change.

"Think about it. Are we likely to see more clean-energy companies or less?" asked Tommy Sikes, who runs an investment advisory firm. Enough of his clients started asking about green investment options that Sikes now includes a brief green talk with all new clients.

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Most experts say there is true investment value in environmental innovation. The tough question is where to find it.

Sikes, of TS Financial, recommends PowerShares WilderHill Clean Energy Portfolio, an exchange-traded fund with more than 40 stocks and a significant position in Cree, a company helping develop energy-efficient lighting.

The PowerShares fund has an expense ratio of 0.6 percent and is up about 30 percent since starting in 2005. That has been good to Sikes' mostly retired clients, who increasingly ask for both green and growth, not one or the other.

The broadening of the green investor base has also fostered new shades of products that flourish beyond traditional grass roots.

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