

Former GreenCape CEO to join Tesla SA

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A Tesla "gigafactory" in the Western Cape might seem like a dream, but with one of the province's own joining Elon Musk's team, it might be within reach.



Tesla Gigafactory in Nevada, US

MEC for economic opportunities Alan Winde is beaming because Evan Rice, former CEO of GreenCape, has been appointed as Tesla's business development manager in SA.

GreenCape was set up by the provincial government in 2010 to support the development of the green economy.

Tesla manufactures the Powerwall, a home battery charged by solar panels, and South Africanborn Musk is building a \$5bn "gigafactory" in the Nevada desert to produce the batteries.

When completed, it will be one of the world's largest buildings, and Musk said at a presentation in May last year that several more factories would be needed around the world.

He said the Powerwall was a "great solution to people in remote parts of the world where there's no electricity" or where it was intermittent or expensive.

When Winde heard about this, he said, his department and GreenCape jumped into action.

"I said we need to get involved, and that is when a number of people in GreenCape started engaging telephonically (with Tesla). They had some teleconferences and then a delegation went to visit," said Winde.

It was probably during those discussions, said Winde, that Rice impressed Tesla executives, who poached him.

"(Rice) phoned me to say he didn't know whether it is good news or bad news, but he is leaving GreenCape. When he told me where he is going, I said it is definitely good news."

"We would very much like to have a gigafactory here. If we can get that right, it will make nuclear obsolete," Winde said.

Rice could not be reached for comment, but tech website hxtt.africa quoted him as saying his job was to develop a market for the Powerwall. Deliveries of the product started late last year.

Source: Business Day

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