

**City of Arcata Energy Committee
Annual Report to the City Council**

August 2009

The Energy Committee meets on the third Monday of each month and serves in an advisory capacity to the City Council, City Manager and City staff in Energy matters related to policies, management and projects.

Committee members include:

Ruthanne Cecil
Jennifer Fuller
Morgan King

Andrew Kulchin
Steve Salzman
Jim Zoellick, Chair

Karen Diemer, Staff Liaison
Beckie Menten, Staff Liaison

I. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Energy Committee has been involved in the following activities since the last Annual Report was submitted to the Council in July of 2008:

Energy Program Specialist – The Committee would like to stress the continued importance of the Energy Program Specialist position. Ms. Beckie Menten continues to do an excellent job. The many accomplishments the City has made in regards to sustainable energy and greenhouse gas emission reductions are largely due to her efforts.

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan – The City of Arcata's Verified Greenhouse Gas Inventory has been completed with the California Climate Action Registry and the City now qualifies as a Climate Action Leader. The Air Resources Board has committed to recognizing the early actions of CCAR members.

The Committee continues to assist staff with the implementation of greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction measures. These include: development of a green building program, development of a pilot time-of-sale program, promotion of alternative fuel vehicles, promotion of sustainable transportation measures, and education and outreach activities.

Overshadowing these successes, however, is the fact that the City is not on track to meet its greenhouse gas reduction goal of a 20% reduction below 2000 levels by 2010. The Committee has been re-evaluating the City's GHG reduction implementation measures and the impacts they are having. Many of the successful measures the City has implemented are associated with reducing the City's municipal carbon footprint. While this is important, municipal emissions only account for about 1% of the community's total emissions. In order for the City to meet its GHG reduction goals it will have to do a better job of engaging the larger community and getting residents to change their energy use patterns in their homes, businesses and transport. In addition, working with regional partners to promote green buildings, sustainable transportation, smart growth, community energy financing options, and large-scale renewable energy development throughout the County will be critical to long-term success.

Education and Outreach – The Committee has worked with staff to conduct numerous education and outreach activities. These include: sponsoring activities during the month of October for Energy Awareness Month, working with students from HSU to develop a new educational display for the City Hall solar electric system, and co-sponsoring the Humboldt Solar Neighbors Tour and the Plan It Green Wheels of Change conference.

Green Building Program – The City continues to pursue the development of a green building program. This includes participating in discussions regarding a coordinated, countywide effort, as well as working to develop specific program plans for the City of Arcata. These events have collectively helped to spread the message of energy awareness and conservation to more than a thousand community members.

Time-of-Sale Program – City staff continue to work with RCEA on the development of a time-of-sale program. The committee advised RCEA staff on development of a energy assessment tool in spring. Program rollout is anticipated this fall.

Green Business Program – The Committee has been considering development of a Green Business Program that would recognize local businesses for their sustainable energy and pro-environment efforts. The Committee hosted a talk by Michael Kraft from the North Coast Small Business Development Center on Green Business Certification program.

Sustainable Transportation – The Committee is considering recommendations to promote sustainable transportation alternatives for City staff and may look for ways to collaborate with similar efforts at the County level. Some of the measures being considered include: employee outreach and education, employee recognition programs, a “Jack-Pass” system for City employees, working with RTA to provide a compatible schedule, a carpool matching system, a bike fleet at City Hall available for running errands during the day, increasing the number of high efficiency vehicles in each department’s pool, and working out a City-sponsored vanpool system.

Community Financing Program – The City’s Energy Program Specialist is working at the county level to develop a financing program that would fund the installation of energy efficiency upgrades and renewable energy system installations for local residents. Low-interest loans would be made available and participants would pay off the loans via a charge on their property tax bills. The City’s Energy Program Specialist presented our local program design to the California Energy Commission (CEC) and 700 webinar participants in May and has also participated in a CEC technical advisory group for development of a state funding program.

Funding for Energy Projects – The City is pursuing funding for various energy projects. This includes applying for Clean Renewable Energy Bonds (CREBS), as well as pursuing American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds for energy efficiency and renewable energy system projects.

Energy Internship – The Committee and staff are pursuing the development of an energy internship with HSU to recruit interns who can assist staff with energy program activities.

II. GOALS FOR COMING YEAR

In the coming year the Energy Committee hopes to:

- Assist with the development of a green building program for the City of Arcata,
- Work with RCEA to develop a draft time-of-sale ordinance for council consideration,
- Support the development of a community financing program for energy projects,
- Work with the Design Review Commission to establish a Green Building / Energy Efficient Building Awards Program,
- Continue to collaborate with RCEA and promote their services,

- Promote sustainable transportation options for City staff,
- Find ways to better engage the community in our GHG reduction efforts, and
- Help the City obtain more alternative fuel vehicles for the City fleet.