

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

**July 2012**

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	Nate McKeever, Vice-Chair	Jim Zoellick
Melanie Faust	Gwelen Paliaga	Julie Neander, Staff Liaison
Mike Kowalski	James Robinson, Chair	Karen Diemer, 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 2012:

**Education and Outreach** – The Committee has worked with the Energy Program Specialist to conduct community outreach activities. These include: Tabling at the North Country Fair and the Plan It Green conference and promoting events for Energy Awareness Month in October.

**Recommendation to Council on Community Choice Aggregation (CCA)** – The Committee spent a series of meetings evaluating the benefits and feasibility of the City implementing its own CCA program or participating in another CCA. It heard presentations from Marin Energy Authority and Local Power, per Council Priority #24 (FY 2011/2012). The Committee will be finalizing a recommendation to the City Council by September 2012 for their consideration.

**Recommendation to Council on High Electricity User Utility Tax (High Energy Tax)** –

The Committee continued to devote many hours to a Council Priority from 2010(Council Priority #31), and in November, Arcata's citizens will have the opportunity to vote on a Excessive Residential Electricity Use Tax Measure. The project is supported by City Council 2012-2013 Priority Projects: #23: Continue to work on energy conservation to work towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by the year 2012 and explore renewable energy options by implementing recommendations from the Energy Committee and the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan.

This measure is being brought before Arcata citizens in response to the fact that electricity use by Arcata's residences is growing at an alarming rate. Compared to the State of California as a whole, Arcata's residential electricity use is growing over three times faster. This is attributable to a small number of residences that are using excessive amounts of electricity. This is having serious detrimental effects on Arcata's efforts to meet sustainable energy and greenhouse gas reduction goals. In an effort to discourage high electricity use and to raise revenue to fund energy efficiency and renewable energy efforts, the Committee has extensively explored the possibility of implementing a high energy tax.

The Excessive Residential Electricity Use Tax will place a 45% tax on electricity of residential households that exceed 600% or 3 times the average residential electrical usage in Arcata. The goal of the tax is to assist the City in meeting its adopted greenhouse gas emission reduction goals, to align the City of Arcata with emerging California energy policy, and to create a disincentive for excessive energy use in residential neighborhoods.

**Collaboration with the City of Eureka Energy Committee** – The Committee has initiated collaboration on issues of mutual interest with the City of Eureka Energy Committee. Committee Chair Robinson is serving as liaison.

**Energy Policy Positions** – The Committee recommended that a letter of support be sent to the California Energy Commission in support of the BUSINESS. PIER (Public Interest Energy Research) Program and encouraged the state to find a method to continue to fund this type of research programming.

**Joint Meeting with the Forestry Committee** – The Committee met with the Forestry Committee to discuss the implications of biomass and carbon sequestration. More joint meetings are planned for the future.

**Collaboration with Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA)** – The Committee continues to consult and work collaboratively with RCEA on numerous energy and climate-related issues.

## **II. GOALS FOR COMING YEAR**

In the coming year the Energy Committee hopes to:

- Continue to work on a Community Choice Aggregation or other development of renewable power sources;
- Track the progress of the High Energy Use Tax if passed by the voters;
- Recommend Quality of Life Indicators to the Community Development Department and City Council related to energy;
- Assist City in re-establishing a greenhouse gas reduction goal;
- Continue to explore and recommend energy efficiency measures for City owned facilities;
- Explore community solar programs;
- Further explore the development of a green building program for the City of Arcata in the context of the new county-wide program and based on green building measures laid out in the 2010 California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen);
- Assist with the development of the City's time-of-sale program;
- Continue to collaborate with RCEA and promote their services;
- Continue to work with the Transportation Safety Committee to promote non-motorized modes of travel and to implement project ideas;
- Find ways to better engage the community in our GHG reduction efforts;
- Continue conversation on carbon sequestration and biomass with the Forestry Management Committee;
- Help the City obtain more alternative fuel vehicles for the City fleet;
- Continue to collaborate with the Eureka Energy Committee;

- Facilitate dialogue between City and the Renewable Energy Secure Communities (RESCO) program (i.e. informational presentation to Council);
- Help City to develop a community electric vehicle action plan.