



Gunnison County Energy Action Plan

Adopted by the Gunnison County Board of County
Commissioners on August 4, 2009

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Introduction

GREEN TEAM

The Gunnison County Green Team was established in March 2009 to advance and implement a County-wide "Green Plan" to ensure unified, coordinated and efficient action in meeting Gunnison County's environmental goals.

This Green Team is currently comprised of the following members:

Rich Corbett, Facilities Supervisor
Ben Cowan, Assistant Finance Director
Katherine Haase, Administrative Services Manager
Mike Lee, IT Director
Eric McPhail, CSU Extension
Debbie Moore, Personnel Director
Jon Mugglestone, CSU Extension
Cathie Pagano, Planner
Lee Partch, Fleet Manager
Mike Pelletier, GIS Manager

GUNNISON COUNTY ENERGY ACTION PLAN ADVISORY GROUP

In April 2008, Gunnison County received a grant for \$12,850 from the State of Colorado Department of Local Affairs and partnered with the Office of Resource Efficiency to create a county-wide Energy Action Plan for presentation to the County and the municipalities within Gunnison County.

On April 28, 2009, the Gunnison County contingent of the Energy Action Plan Advisory Group presented their summary of recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners. The Green Team would like to acknowledge the time and dedication of the Energy Action Plan Advisory Group for the last few months that culminated in this list of recommendations.

The active members of that group were as follows:

Chris Behan
Hap Channell
Nic Easley
Nathaniel Gallion
Rob Hicks
Richard Karas (Chair)
Bart Laemmel
Donald McLeod
Jeremy Johndrow

Jon Mugglestone
Cathie Pagano
Mike Pelletier
John Scott
Maya Silver
Bruce Van Buskirk
Andris Zobs

Other members contributed on an occasional basis or observed the process via email.

IMPLEMENTATION PROPOSAL

On May 11, 2009, the Green Team received a directive from County Manager Matthew Birnie to analyze the recommendations and come back with specific recommendations for implementation within the County organization.

The implementation proposal contained within this document is the result of individual considerations and group discussions among the members of the Gunnison County Green Team that occurred between May 11, 2009 and July 15, 2009.

For clarity's sake, the categories of recommendations from the Green Team are in the same order as those from the Energy Action Plan Advisory Group, except that the Residential and Commercial actions have been combined to avoid redundancy.

ACTIONS FOR CURRENT CONSIDERATION

In general, the Green Team supports all voluntary installations of energy and water efficient improvements and appliances and distributed power production equipment. The focus of this document's recommendations are for specific actions and new regulations that the County government may have a direct, effective role in addressing.

Buildings

- 1) Energy Audits and Weatherization Retrofits
 - a) Recommend directing staff to investigate the use of 2008 State of Colorado House Bill 1350 or otherwise to offer low cost loans to fund upfront audits and weatherization retrofits by creating a guaranteed loan fund repaid via property tax bills.
 - b) This program could be set up to mirror other successful programs such as ClimateSmart in Boulder County.
 - c) Explore revolving fund establishment from any of the following sources, among others:
 - i) Bond issuance using 2008 HB 1350
 - ii) Grants
 - iii) Fund balance appropriations
 - d) Explore possibilities to create a regional Weatherization Program in order to gain the economies of scale needed to avoid an administrative burden to the County.

- e) Use the Geographic Information System, Assessor and utility databases to help target residences that are least efficient in order to focus the use of resources.
- 2) Building Codes
 - a) Explore possibilities of adopting the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code.
 - i) The Governor's Energy Office is very interested in accelerating adoption of the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code and has offered to assist with this transition by offering:
 - (1) Free trainings for Planning Offices.
 - (2) Free classes for contractors and builders to adjust their bids and refrain from using older, less energy efficient building techniques.
 - ii) By 2030, the Governor's Energy Office reports that half of all buildings in the United States will be built after 2000, so this is an area that can have a tremendous impact on overall efficiency.
 - b) Consider increasing the points required for new residential construction on the Planning Department's Energy Conservation Worksheet.
 - c) Consider requiring commercial construction projects to attain a set amount of points on the Energy Conservation Worksheet.
 - d) Consider the use of various disincentives to discourage the use of:
 - i) Outdoor heated hot tubs
 - ii) Heated eaves
 - iii) Heated driveways
- 3) Explore possibilities of amending other County regulatory documents to help achieve County energy conservation and efficiency goals.

Transportation

- 1) Public Transit
 - a) Continue to assist the Rural Transportation Authority with placement of Park n' Rides by:
 - i) Identifying possible Park n' Ride locations
 - ii) Helping to determine necessary right-of-way
- 2) Fuel Efficiency
 - a) Continue working on increasing the efficiency of County fleet vehicle and heavy equipment by:
 - i) Replacing old, inefficient vehicles and equipment with vehicles and equipment that reduce fuel consumption and/or emissions
 - ii) Assessing the appropriateness of current vehicle applications
 - b) Continuous assessment of use of alternative fuels.

Waste

- 1) Paper Waste
 - a) Require all future printer purchases to include capability to double-side print jobs.
 - b) Assess the benefit of having dual monitors for those departments that regularly print documents to transfer information to other software applications.

- c) Amend or enforce the current adopted resolution for the use of recycled paper in County Departments.
- d) Aggressively appropriate funds for the expansion of the county-wide Document Management System to move toward paperless government.
- e) Consider adoption of a purchasing policy that encourages or requires the purchase of environmentally friendly products.
- f) Analyze the most advantageous forms of recycling to determine which new forms should be implemented or switch to more effective forms.

Policy, Finance and Education

1) Financing

- a) Actively apply for grant opportunities for County projects or program establishment as they become available. Numerous grant opportunities will be available to non-entitled governments like Gunnison County from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act later this year.
- b) Explore opportunities for establishment of a revolving loan fund as detailed above in the Buildings section.

2) Education

a) Lead by Example

- i) Utilize press releases to publicize energy related accomplishments and initiatives of Gunnison County. This is not an area that Gunnison County has actively addressed in the past on the many important achievements to date.
- ii) Establish a designated section of the Gunnison County website to publicize current energy/resource efficiency measures including:
 - (1) Major past accomplishments.
 - (2) Planned initiatives including strategic results related to energy and steps that will be taken to reach those results.
 - (3) Regulations and services currently in use that encourage efficient use of energy and resources.
 - (4) Contributions to and partnerships with non-profits related to energy/resource efficiency.
 - (5) Consider cost effective distributed power production technologies on County properties in order to save money, reduce emissions and provide leadership to our community. A proposed project is a large heat collector on the Doyleville Shop.
- iii) Continue working toward attainment of the 10% efficiency increase in county buildings via performance contracting and modification of employee behavior.
- iv) Consider using a performance contract for planned facility construction (such as the Jail and Public Works facilities) to install advanced efficiency measures such as woody biomass boilers or other emerging, but proven, technologies. Utilizing an Energy Service Company would provide the expertise to install proven technologies that Gunnison County taxpayers expect.

b) Other

- i) Coordinate dissemination of information to create a cohesive outreach program from the following sources:
 - (1) Office of Resource Efficiency

- (2) County Extension Office
- (3) Gunnison County
- ii) Work with County and State organizations to relay information detailing the advantages (including long-term financial advantages) of using advanced construction techniques, installing energy efficient appliances and small scale power production equipment when constituents are applying for building permits.
- iii) Work with the Curriculum Director at the Gunnison County School District to determine whether Gunnison County can assist with furthering energy efficiency and conservation curriculum.

ACTIONS NOT FOR CURRENT CONSIDERATION

The following recommendations are not suggested by the Green Team for consideration by the Board of County Commissioners, at least in the immediate future. Many of the recommendations are prohibitively expensive or not feasible at this time. It is also important to note that, in general on any project that requires prioritization, focusing time and resources in a few areas initially is more beneficial than attempting to do everything at once.

Buildings

- 1) Although encouragement of recycling and education of recycling availability can be distributed during the building process, the County should not require the use of recycled or the recycling of scrap waste from building sites. This would be very difficult to enforce.
- 2) Currently, beyond the distribution of information about various tax rebates and other grants or financing methods, the County should not begin providing funding for power production equipment.

Transportation

- 1) Requiring siting of bus stops within proposed new development would be very difficult. Ease of transit to existing bus stops is already required in the current Land Use Regulations. We feel that the current development of north-south mass transit modes along the Gunnison-Crested Butte corridor with ease of walking, biking or driving to the north-south artery at bus stops and park n' rides is the best option for successful use of mass transit.

Waste

- 1) The County should not pursue methane harvesting due to the lack of water at the landfill site, which is required to create an aerobic environment to generate quantities of methane required in order to make this feasible. The current "dry tomb" style landfill is not conducive to harvesting. In fact, according to Marlene Crosby, Public Works Director, methane levels are currently barely measurable even without venting.

- 2) Do not add more types of recyclables (i.e. #5 and #7 plastics) to the list of acceptable products at the Recycling Center, unless more storage space is acquired first and market conditions improve.
- 3) Do not consider regulation of commercial construction waste. This would be extremely difficult to enforce.

Policy, Finance and Education

- 1) Hiring an Energy Coordinator for only Gunnison County is probably not in the best interest of Gunnison County taxpayers at this time. The Governor's Energy Office recommends that these positions should serve an area with a population no more than 80,000 and no less than 25,000. The GEO will be using its share of Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants to help fund and or establish these positions and the County should work with the municipalities and a neighboring County to utilize such position in a more regional manner, along with continuing to collaborate with the Office of Resource Efficiency. A regional model would allow the Energy Manager to obtain more grants due to intergovernmental collaboration and a greater scope, which are both very attractive to prospective grantors. The Gunnison County Green Team can continue to help with the implementation of a County specific energy program.
- 2) Impact fees could be an important financing method at some point, but the Green Team does not recommend consideration of these or carbon taxes of any kind at this time (however, the recommendations do include looking into possible bond funding for a weatherization program, which would be repaid by those that received weatherization benefits). Although these methods have been successful in more affluent areas, we believe that Gunnison County residents will be more resistant to these steps until some smaller, less wealthy jurisdictions around the country begin looking for financial support from their residents.