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SUMMIT COUNTY ADOPTS SUSTAINABILITY PLAN AND GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION GOAL

The Summit County Council recently broke ground in leading the County's efforts to be more sustainable. A two year action plan complete with steps to save energy and money, and support the economy and community has been formally adopted. Adapting the Brundtland Commission's definition of Sustainability the Council aims to apply the following statement in all functions of the County's operations and facilities: "As a sustainable community, Summit County considers the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, by integrating and balancing environmental, economic, and social values."

After completing a carbon emission inventory for 2009 and 2010, the Council chose a goal to reduce their overall facility and operations emissions 13% from the business-as-usual projections by December 31, 2013. Electricity and fleet gasoline usage make up the largest portion of the County's Carbon Emissions Inventory, which is an inventory of the County's landfill emissions and total usage of electricity, natural gas, water, fleet fuel, bus transit fuel, and employee's commuting fuel. The units of energy or emissions have been converted into a carbon emission equivalent, so kilowatt-hours (kWh) and gallons of water can be easily compared side by side in terms of carbon.

County Sustainability Coordinator, Ashley Koehler, stated that "*regardless of one's opinion of whether or not human-caused sources of carbon emissions contribute to climate change, the goals and actions in this plan are meant to benefit our community, economy, and environment. It is the intent that we more efficiently use resources, energy, and money to operate as a County government and promote that within the community.*"

Summit County Manager, Bob Jasper, asserted that "*after taking this position in 2010, as the first County Manager, I quickly identified the need to organize what the County priorities are and a plan to achieve them.*" A Strategic Plan was completed this past summer, with sustainability ranked a close second in priority to the economy. Council Chair, Chris Robinson, stated that "*the County needs to take steps to be good stewards of the resources that we use, both natural resources and taxpayer dollars. We hope to create a path that our employees and community can rely on in becoming a more sustainable County.*"

The Sustainability Plan includes goals that reach out to the community, such as increasing renewable energy generation by 100 kW, supporting the adoption of more energy efficient building codes, creating disincentives for heated driveways, and supporting local businesses and agriculture. In-house efforts will be to complete weatherization of all County facilities, build all new facilities to LEED™ standards, extend the life of the County landfills, and convert the fleet to use cleaner alternative fuels. This plan can be found at www.summitcounty.org/sustainability.