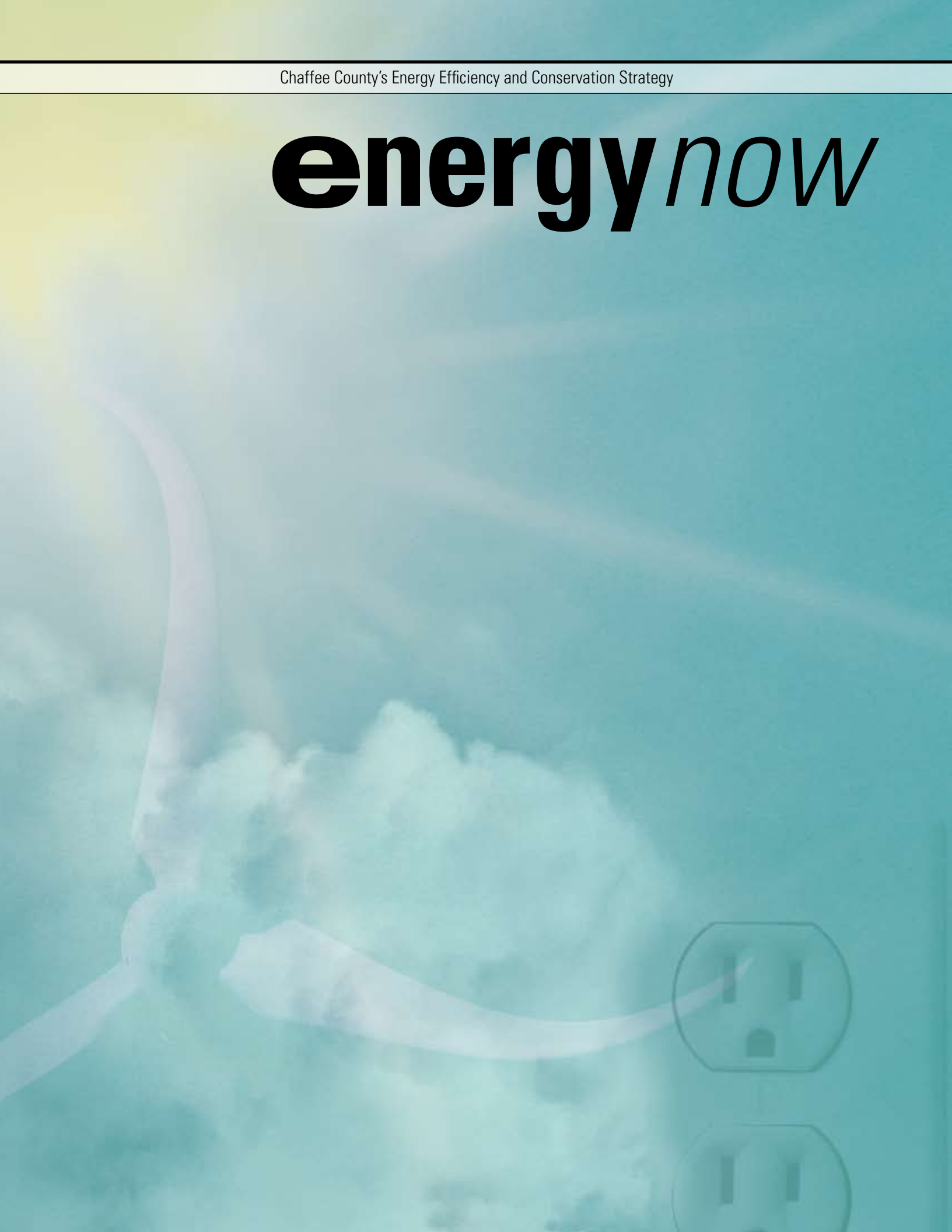


energy *now*



Prepared by
INCITE Consulting
123 G Street
Salida, Colorado 81201
719-239-2006
kw@incite-consulting.com

This planning report was prepared with funding from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Colorado Governor's Energy Office, Chaffee County, Buena Vista, Poncha Springs and Salida.

Elements of this report may be presented independently elsewhere at the discretion of INCITE Consulting. This report will be available on the Internet for an indefinite length of time at www.chaffeecounty-energyplan.com.

INCITE Consulting has made every reasonable effort to assure the accuracy of the information contained herein. However, the contents and sources upon which it is based are subject to changes, omissions and errors and INCITE Consulting accepts no responsibility or liability for inaccuracies that may be present. THIS DOCUMENT IS PROVIDED FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY. INCITE CONSULTING PRESENTS THE MATERIAL IN THIS REPORT WITHOUT IT OR ANY OF ITS SUBCONTRACTORS MAKING ANY WARRANTY, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY AND FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, OR ASSUMING ANY LEGAL LIABILITY OR RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACCURACY, COMPLETENESS, OR USEFULNESS OF ANY INFORMATION, APPARATUS, PRODUCT, OR PROCESS DISCLOSED, OR REPRESENTING THAT ITS USE WOULD NOT INFRINGE PRIVATELY OWNED RIGHTS. THE USER ASSUMES THE ENTIRE RISK AS TO THE ACCURACY AND THE USE OF THIS DOCUMENT AND ANY RELATED OR LINKED DOCUMENTS.



Department of Local Affairs



Strengthening Colorado Communities



Governor's
Energy Office

Colorado
State
University
Extension



INCITE Team
Kathryn Wadsworth, INCITE Consulting
Jerry Mallett, INCITE Consulting
Yvonne Barnes, Mountain Mapping
Mike Ferree, Cate Capital
Tim Kclo, Peak Solar Design
Chris Martin, Headwaters Energy and Finance
Mark Wiard, Wiard Design
Katherine McCoy, Graphic Designer
Joe Stone, Writer/Editor

Table of Contents

Vision	4
Introduction	4
Strategies	6
Overview	7
Local Government	8
Energy Production	10
Built Environment	12
Transportation	13
Waste	14
Education	15
Funding	16
Renewable Energy Resources	17
Energy Use Analysis	28
Community Input	29
Oct. 15 Survey Results	30
Community Needs Assessment	35
Attachments	41
Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report	43
Existing Local Government Plans and Resolutions	51
2009 State Legislation	55

Vision

Chaffee County and the municipalities of Buena Vista, Poncha Springs and Salida promote and support energy conservation, energy efficiency and innovative uses of renewable resources and technology.

Introduction

energy*now* is the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy for Chaffee County, Buena Vista, Poncha Springs and Salida. This strategic plan draws upon leadership provided by local government officials and staff and the Governor's Energy Office (GEO) as well as the preferences expressed by local residents.

By incorporating energy use data, energy sources and renewable energy resources, **energy***now* identifies six categories with 27 strategic actions that represent the most prudent and fiscally responsible means by which Chaffee County and the communities can reduce energy use, utilize renewable energy resources and realize economic benefits. An emphasis on education, conservation and energy efficiency reflects the wishes of county residents and ensures a high level of public support.

energy*now* fulfills a GEO requirement that qualifies Chaffee County, Buena Vista, Poncha Springs and Salida for additional Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant funding through the GEO to implement the strategies of **energy***now*. Approval of the plan qualifies Chaffee County and municipalities for additional grant funding from state and federal sources.

Chaffee County and Energy

Chaffee County is located on the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains in central Colorado and has a year-round population estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau at 16,733 in 2007. The population density was estimated to be 16 persons per square mile, compared to 46.9 persons per square mile for the State of Colorado and an average density of 86.2 for the entire United States.

A rural area, Chaffee County encompasses 649,452 acres with over 80 percent of that land in public ownership. Municipalities located in Chaffee County are the City of Salida, the Town of Buena Vista and the Town of Poncha Springs.

Chaffee County's primary use of energy is electricity provided by two suppliers: Sangre de Cristo Electric Association in the northern portion of the County (Buena Vista) and Xcel Energy to the south (Salida and Poncha Springs). As part of Touchstone Energy Cooperative, Sangre de Cristo purchases its electricity from Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association.

Atmos Energy provides natural gas throughout Chaffee County, and three privately owned companies supply propane to residents and businesses, reflecting another highly used resource for heating. A preliminary greenhouse gas inventory puts Chaffee County emissions for 2007 at 453,139 metric tons (999 million pounds) carbon dioxide equivalent.

Governor Ritter's *Colorado Climate Action Plan* establishes a goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in 2020 by 20 percent relative to emissions in 2005. Local government actions taken to assist meeting this goal can provide multiple local benefits, including decreasing air pollution, creating jobs, extending landfill life, and reducing energy expenditures for the county, its businesses and its citizens.

The Chaffee County **energy***now* Plan:

- . Guides decision-making and policy development by local government in the management of energy use and conservation efforts,
- . Provides an inventory of current energy use and renewable energy sources and
- . Recommends a set of strategies to meet the energy use goals of the county.

The Planning Process

The **energy***now* planning process occurred over a six-month period with steering committee oversight and community involvement. Planning focused on energy use and sources, public meetings, public outreach and individual meetings. The planning process included:

- . A county-wide energy use analysis,
- . A review of renewable resources,
- . An exploration of funding options and
- . Community input.

Energy use and emissions data were gathered for buildings, transportation, livestock, food production and distribution, fuel production and waste for inclusion in a greenhouse gas emissions inventory. The data collected was provided to the University of Colorado at Denver to produce greenhouse gas calculations using accepted formulas and methodologies.

Extensive data from the Chaffee County GIS (geographic information system) provided logistical information about renewable energy resources and their potential for development.

On October 15, 2009, more than 65 community members and local officials participated in an economic development summit focused on renewable energy.

Public meetings were also held November 18, 2009, at the Community Center in Buena Vista and November 19, 2009, at the Chaffee County Fairgrounds. The results from these community input meetings indicate a strong community desire for actions directed toward education, conservation and efficient use of energy.

Community input indicates 69.4 percent of residents surveyed believe “developing alternative energy/ clean energy in the county” is “critically important,” with residents favoring solar and geothermal resources. A resounding 93.1 percent support investments in renewable energy technology for public buildings.

Chaffee County Energy Efficiency and Conservation Steering Committee

Dennis Giese, Chaffee County County Commissioner
 Bob Christiansen, Chaffee County Administrator
 Dan Short, Chaffee County Finance Director
 Robert Flint, Buena Vista Trustee
 Sue Boyd, Buena Vista Administrator
 Aaron Kroschel, Poncha Springs Trustee
 Greg Smith, Poncha Springs Public Works Director
 Scott Damman, Salida City Councilman
 Jack Lewis, Salida City Administrator
 Kurt Jones, Colorado State University Extension Agent

Utility Partners

Atmos Energy, Kevin Kerrigan
 Sangre De Cristo Electric Association, Bill Bennett
 Sangre De Cristo Electric Association, Linda Nyberg
 Xcel Energy, Kathy Worthington



Strategies

The Vision of **energy**now can be achieved through a combination of strategies. An analysis of energy use, available resources and funding mechanisms produced a list of strategies that provide the best local opportunities to reduce energy consumption, minimize greenhouse gas emissions, reduce energy expenditures, support the local economy and sustain the local environment.



Edison Electric Light Company of Salida built the first steam-powered electric generation plant in Salida in 1887. The coal-fired plant was 28 feet square with an attached boiler room and a 75-foot-tall smokestack. It began by supplying power for 750 electric light bulbs including, for the first time, street lights on F Street.

The Edison Electric Light Company of Salida merged in 1905 with Salida Light Power and Utility Company, which had constructed a hydroelectric generating system on the South Arkansas River.

“Work began . . . on the auxiliary power plant of the Salida Light Power and Utility Company. The new powerhouse will be just below Maysville where the North Fork empties into the main river, and the water will be piped from the upper plant to this point. The new plant will run two dynamos, and on its completion the smelter will be wired and power furnished.” The Salida Record, July 17, 1908.

The original power company, organized by local citizens, became part of the Public Service Company of Colorado in 1924. The steam plant supplied electrical power to Salida from 1887 to 1958 when it was taken out of service.

Overview

energy*now* strategies are organized in six categories as follows.

Local Government

- . Property-assessed Financing
- . Building Codes
- . ENERGY STAR Partnership
- . Resource Development Regulations
- . Energy Efficiency Planning
- . Climate Protection Agreements
- . Community Energy Coordination
- . Local Event Permits
- . Utility Resource Planning

Energy Production

- . Sustainable Energy Finance Program
- . Renewable Energy Production
- . Utility Rebates
- . Utility Incentives
- . Solar Equipment Leasing

Built Environment

- . Energy Audits
- . Retrofit Buildings
- . Weatherization Programs
- . Outdoor Lighting

Transportation

- . Fuel Efficiency
- . Multi-modal Transportation
- . Clean Vehicle Technology

Waste

- . Paper Reduction
- . Recycling
- . Methane Capture

Education

- . Online Information Hub
- . Local Media
- . Agencies and Organizations

Economic Benefits

The vast majority of money spent on energy related bills immediately leaves the local economy. Finding ways for each household, business and government entity to spend less on energy means a significant amount of funds can be used on other priorities, generating economic benefits. Clean energy also represents one of the few opportunities for new growth in a stagnant economy and can be a significant source of local jobs.

Energy conservation, energy efficiency and renewable energy strategies generally produce the same kinds of economic benefits, and while the return on investment varies, all **energy***now* strategies can produce long-term economic benefits for Chaffee County, Buena Vista, Poncha Springs and Salida.

1. Local Government

County and municipal governments can set the example for energy efficiency, energy conservation and innovative uses of renewable energy by reviewing existing policies and revising them to promote **energy***now* strategies.

Economic benefits will accrue as energy conservation and efficiency initiatives reduce operating costs. Strategies that support energy-saving measures for businesses and residents will reduce energy expenditures and keep more money in the local economy.

Local government strategies can also establish energy policies that bolster energy-related business opportunities for suppliers, builders and funding institutions.

1.1 Property-assessed Financing

Action

Pursue the development of county, municipal and/or special district Property-Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) programs to finance renewable energy and energy efficiency improvements for local property owners as authorized with the passage in 2008 of H.B. 1350 (C.R.S. 30-20-601.5 and C.R.S. 31-25-500.2).

Implementation

Implementing a PACE program requires voter approval to issue bonds to finance clean energy improvements for property owners.

Qualifying improvements would be determined locally and could include insulation, windows and doors, automatic energy control systems, HVAC systems, caulking and weather-stripping, energy efficient lighting, passive lighting, energy-recovery systems, geothermal heat pumps solar water heating, solar thermal-electric, photovoltaic, wind, biomass, hydroelectric, geothermal-electric, bio-fuels, and/or fuel cells.

Funds for a PACE program can be generated using existing bond potential or by creating improvement districts that issue bonds. The bonds provide financing for property owners making qualifying renewable energy improvements. The borrowers then repay the loans through a special assessment on their property.

1.2 Building Codes

Action

Update existing building codes to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy for new construction and remodeling projects.

Implementation

Implementation would be at the discretion of the appropriate county and municipal authorities during code revision sessions.

Identify existing codes and principles for adoption. Examples include the International Energy Conservation Code, Built Green Colorado, Energy Star, LEED and the U.S. Department of Energy's "Building America" program.

1.3 ENERGY STAR Partnership

Action

Continue to partner with the Governor's Energy Office to encourage construction of ENERGY STAR certified new homes and use of ENERGY STAR appliances.

Implementation

Annually apply for program renewal with the Colorado Governor's Energy Office to promote the benefits of ENERGY STAR certified homes. Funding is provided through a matching grant program from the Colorado Governor's Energy Office.



1.4 Resource Development Regulations

Action

Enhance local regulations to support responsible development of renewable resources.

Implementation

Review and update special land use (1041) regulations to address potential issues associated with development of renewable energy resources.

1.5 Energy Efficiency Planning

Action

Consider energy efficiency as an important component of all future county and municipal building plans, including new construction and remodeling projects.

Implementation

Develop policies that incorporate energy efficiency, energy conservation and renewable energy considerations as a component of all future county and municipal plans.

1.6 Climate Protection Agreements

Action

Investigate and potentially adopt climate protection agreements and initiatives.

Implementation

Consider a resolution to adopt broad-based agreements such as the Sierra Club's Cool Cities or Mayors Climate Protection agreements as well as local and grass roots initiatives.

For example, cities participating in the Mayors Climate Protection Agreement commit to take the following three actions:

- . Strive to meet or beat the Kyoto Protocol targets in their own communities through actions ranging from anti-sprawl land-use policies to urban forest restoration projects to public information campaigns;
- . Urge state and federal governments to enact policies and programs to meet or exceed the greenhouse gas emission reduction target suggested for the United States in the Kyoto Protocol – seven percent reduction from 1990 levels by 2012; and
- . Urge the U.S. Congress to pass the bipartisan greenhouse gas reduction legislation, which would establish a national emission trading system

1.7 Community Energy Coordination

Action

Provide ongoing support for **energy***now* efforts.

Implementation

Establish a community energy advisory board to provide guidance for the community energy coordinator and oversight of community energy initiatives.

Support the community energy coordinator hired by Chaffee County to organize and coordinate energy-related efforts among various entities and departments in Chaffee County, Buena Vista, Poncha Springs and Salida.

Initial funding for this position will be provided by the Governor's Energy Office through the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program.

The energy coordinator will be responsible for implementing community outreach and education, reviewing and updating **energynow** on an annual basis, and positioning the county to access GEO programs and funding opportunities.

Support bi-annual assessments of greenhouse gas emissions in Chaffee County.

Enhance existing data to provide more accurate numbers for future greenhouse gas emissions assessments, including

- . Propane usage,
- . Traffic counts at county boundaries to distinguish between local and non-local traffic, and
- . Information on locally produced food to reflect lower emissions from food distribution.

1.8 Local Event Permits

Action

Update event applications to incorporate energy efficiency requirements, recycling and use of renewable resources.

Implementation

Update event and park use applications to incorporate conservation, energy efficiency and clean energy sources for local events such as the Chaffee County Fair, FIBArk, Gold Rush Days and holiday events.

1.9 Utility Resource Planning

Action

Increase participation in electric utility resource planning.

Implementation

Identify the fuel mix used by local electric utilities and their plans for building capacity. Identify opportunities to comment on electric utilities' resource planning matters that affect fuel mix and, therefore, the potential to meet emissions reduction goals as outlined by **energynow**.

2. Energy Production

With energy production dominated by utility companies, production strategies require close cooperation with the utilities and a commitment to expand, adopt and implement polices to address responsible development of renewable energy production projects.

Energy production strategies offer the greatest potential for creating local jobs as well as enhancing revenue for existing businesses, including agriculture. For example, in addition to creating jobs and revenue, woody biomass fuel production would also support wildfire mitigation in areas suffering from unhealthy overgrowth or beetle kill. Bio-fuel strategies could promote new cash crops for local agriculture, while distributed solar and wind electricity production can offset energy expenditures and offer long-term revenue opportunities.

2.1 Sustainable Energy Finance Program

Action

Support the development of county, municipal and/or special district Property-Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) programs to finance renewable energy and energy efficiency improvements for local property owners as authorized with the passage in 2008 of H.B. 1350 (C.R.S. 30-20-601.5 and C.R.S. 31-25-500.2).

Implementation

Implementing a PACE program requires voter approval to issue bonds that would finance clean energy resource development. Voter-approved bonds can be issued through the county, municipalities or through a special improvement district.



Qualifying improvements would be determined locally and could include technologies for solar water heating, solar thermal electricity, photovoltaic electricity, wind-generated power, biomass energy, hydroelectric power, geothermal electricity, bio-fuels and hydrogen fuel cells.

Funds for a PACE program can be generated using existing bond potential or by creating improvement districts that issue bonds. The bonds provide financing for qualifying renewable energy improvements, and loans are repaid through a special property assessment.

2.2 Renewable Energy Production

Action

Partner with utilities and private businesses to develop local distributed energy production.

Implementation

Consider construction of larger energy production capacity through bond issues, partnerships with business and other appropriate measures. As identified in the "Renewable Energy Resources" section, the most promising local possibilities include solar-based technologies, geothermal-based applications and bio-fuels, including bio-fuel crop production and bio-fuel processing (e.g., Solix facility near Durango).

Promote enhanced use of net-zero construction principles to supply locally produced power on a building-by-building basis.

2.3 Utility Rebates

Action

Maximize the use of utility rebate incentives.

Implementation

Consider using utility rebates to install renewable energy production equipment at public facilities. Encourage residents and business to take advantage of these rebates as well.

2.4 Utility Incentives

Action

Support increased utility demand and power supply incentives, including an aggressive renewable portfolio standard.

Implementation

Partner with local utilities to support incentivized energy conscious policies and accelerated implementation of Smart Grid technology.

2.5 Solar Equipment Leasing

Action

Allow for lease-to-own programs for residential solar power equipment and commercial solar systems up to 500 kilowatts.

Implementation

Investigate programs created under new state legislation, including SolarCity in Westminster and SunRun of San Francisco. Both companies have developed lease-to-own programs for residential solar power equipment and commercial systems in Colorado.



3. Built Environment

The built environment encompasses all of the manmade features in our surroundings, ranging from public buildings and infrastructure to homes. Based on the *Chaffee County Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report*, our built environment consumes over 30 percent of the energy used in Chaffee County, more than any other category. Buildings dominate this category with commercial and government buildings accounting for sixteen percent and residential buildings for fourteen percent.

As the largest consumer of energy in the county, the built environment offers the greatest opportunity for reducing energy consumption and saving money. Energy audits can identify and help prioritize specific projects like weatherization, energy-efficient appliance upgrades and renewable energy technologies.

Energy efficient equipment and conservation technologies pay for themselves in reduced energy costs, after which the savings translate into reduced expenses for local governments, businesses and residents. Renewable energy technologies also reduce energy expenditures and provide a potential source of revenue.

3.1 Energy Audits

Action

Conduct energy audits to identify energy-saving opportunities in buildings.

Implementation

Promote energy audits of all public buildings.

Support energy audits for commercial and residential buildings.

Pooling resources and developing strategic partnerships with local utility providers, the GEO and/or Southwest Conservation Corps offer cost-effective options.

3.2 Retrofit Buildings

Action

Promote retrofitting buildings for energy efficiency and renewable energy generation.

Implementation

Enhance planned upgrades to government buildings by implementing recommendations from energy audits.

Promote replacement of incandescent and halogen light bulbs with fluorescent and LED lights, possibly through retailer partnerships or rebates.

Promote replacement of T12 fluorescent lamps (magnetic ballast) with more efficient T8 fluorescent lamps (electronic ballast).

Promote use of ENERGY STAR appliances through bulk community buying.

Promote “smart” power strips to reduce phantom power drain.

Promote room occupancy sensors to control lighting and temperature in individual rooms.

Additional retrofit projects could include adding insulation, replacing old windows, installing ground source heat pumps, installing photovoltaic panels where appropriate, installing solar hot water equipment, using biomass for heat, installing combined heat/power equipment, and implementing other net-zero principles.



3.3 Weatherization Programs

Action

Continue working with the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments to facilitate weatherization assistance for low to middle-income residents.

Implementation

Encourage coordination among county agencies to get weatherization assistance for homes.

3.4 Outdoor Lighting

Action

Enhance existing outdoor lighting for energy efficiency.

Implementation

Identify opportunities to replace public outdoor lighting – including traffic signals, streetlights and parking lot lights – with more efficient lights.

In conjunction with lighting upgrades, consider retrofitting fixtures for “dark sky” downcast lighting to ensure efficient use of light and minimal light pollution.

4. Transportation

Transportation accounts for 21 percent of energy use in Chaffee County, second only to the built environment. Transportation presents a unique set of challenges due to the need for “portable power,” which creates a heavy reliance on fossil-based fuels.

Conservation efforts can produce significant savings, and developing local bio-fuel capacity can create jobs and revenue within the county, particularly in agriculture, while providing a fuel source that contributes no additional carbon to the atmosphere.

4.1 Fuel Efficiency

Action

Increase the efficiency of fleet vehicles and heavy equipment.

Implementation

Identify ways to enhance fuel efficiency and reduce harmful emissions in local vehicle fleets. Possible improvements include vehicle operation requirements (e.g., no idling, proper tire inflation, regular tune-ups); replacing old, inefficient vehicles and equipment with models that reduce fuel consumption and/or emissions; and use of alternative fuels.

4.2 Multi-modal Transportation

Action

Promote pedestrian, bicycle and low-emission vehicle traffic in Chaffee County.

Implementation

Enhance existing trail systems, bike lanes, sidewalks, ordinances, safe routes to schools and other measures that promote walking and bicycling.

Promote use of low-emission vehicles like golf carts and scooters in appropriate settings (e.g., municipalities and other communities).

Review ordinances and planning considerations to enhance these alternative modes of transportation.



4.3 Clean Vehicle Technology

Action

Support clean vehicle technology in local mass transit – school buses, rafting buses, Chaffee Shuttle, and Monarch shuttle.

Implementation

Implementation could include supporting large-scale conversion of local vehicle fleets to natural gas, bio-diesel, electricity, hydrogen or other fuel sources.

5. Waste

Waste accounts for over 10 percent of Chaffee County's greenhouse gas emissions, including diesel exhaust from waste-handling equipment and methane from the landfill. Strategies to minimize these emissions have the added benefit of minimizing the negative environmental and land-use impacts of traditional waste management practices.

In addition to reducing emissions, **energy***now* strategies can reduce waste management costs through streamlining, enhanced recycling and reduced landfill requirements. Diversion of wood waste could also supply feedstock for biomass energy and generate revenue.

5.1 Paper Reduction

Action

Enact progressive paper use policy.

Implementation

Promote paper conservation practices such as copying on both sides of paper, using recycled paper, developing paperless forms and the use of multiple computer screens.

5.2 Recycling

Action

Support increased recycling and reuse of waste materials

Implementation

Enhance existing paper, plastic, glass and metal recycling efforts at local government facilities.

Partner with Waste Management, Upper Arkansas Recycling and other entities to facilitate single-stream curbside recycling, proven to be the most energy-efficient recycling process.

Enhance existing landfill operations to increase recycling and reuse of waste materials (e.g., wood waste for fuel; compostable waste for farming, gardening and environmental restoration).

Support the addition of battery and appliance recycling to local recycling services.

5.3 Methane Capture

Action

Identify potential for methane capture at landfill.

Implementation

Begin to investigate methane emissions at the county landfill and determine the costs and benefits of installing a methane capture capability. Captured methane could then be used as fuel.

6. Education

Raising public awareness about energy issues is crucial to reducing energy use while systematically developing renewable energy production in a responsible manner. Educational efforts should raise awareness about:

- . The economic and environmental benefits of energy conservation,
- . Cost effective ways to improve energy efficiency,
- . Rebate and incentive opportunities,
- . Current available uses of renewable energy sources and
- . New renewable energy technology.

Public education helps local residents make informed decisions that benefit their communities by reducing energy costs, minimizing harmful emissions and preserving the natural environment.

Conservation represents the quickest and easiest way to achieve economic benefits related to energy, and the level of energy conservation achieved is directly related to the level of effort invested in education.

Education strategies can also inform county residents about local energy efficiency and renewable energy suppliers and contractors, thereby supporting local businesses.

6.1 Online Information Hub

Action

Change the county's existing energy Web site www.chaffee-county-energyplan.com to www.chaffee-county-energynow.com and maintain the site as a hub for energy information pertinent to Chaffee County.

Implementation

Maintain the county's Web site to include up-to-date information and links pertaining to energy conservation, energy efficiency, renewable energy, tax incentives, energy grants, local technology and equipment suppliers, local contractors, local utility incentives and any other information that can help Chaffee County and its residents make informed energy choices.

Include links to county and municipality Web sites and any other appropriate community resources.

6.2 Local Media

Action

Utilize local media outlets to inform and educate residents and visitors about energy-related accomplishments and projects, as well as the benefits of energy efficiency and conservation.

Implementation

Promote public awareness by providing regular press releases and public service announcements to local media outlets in a coordinated media campaign that provides timely energy-related information via local radio stations, newspapers, magazines and Web sites.

6.3 Agencies and Organizations

Action

Work with existing government agencies and local organizations to promote education about energy efficiency, conservation, renewable resources and "green" job opportunities.

Implementation

Coordinate with agencies and organizations – like the Colorado State University County Extension Office, the CSU Global Campus program and the Colorado Mountain College green job training program – to disseminate correct and factual information about energy and energy-related jobs.



Funding

Funding mechanisms for energy efficiency, conservation and renewable energy improvements vary widely, and creative new funding opportunities are continually being developed.

Funding opportunities run the gamut from government grants and loan guarantees to property-assessed financing and power purchase agreements. Given the wide range of funding options, choosing the best funding mechanism for a given project is important.

Performance Contracting Program

Performance contracting provides a mechanism for making energy conscious upgrades to buildings with no initial cost to the owner. Improvements are financed and then paid for with the resulting energy savings. Businesses that develop, install, and arrange financing for these types of projects are known as energy service companies. Energy service companies act as project developers for a wide range of tasks and assume the risks associated with the project. Their services fees are bundled into the project cost and are repaid through the savings generated by the project.

Power Purchase Agreements

A power purchase agreement is a contract between an electricity generator and a power purchaser. The power purchaser agrees to pay a set rate for electricity for the life of the contract, which then enables the power generator to secure financing for construction of power generating capacity.

Through power purchase agreements, businesses, schools and governments can finance non-utility-owned electricity generating facilities that tap renewable resources and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Grants

Colorado Governor's Energy Office

The Colorado Governor's Energy Office, using American Reinvestment and Recovery Act monies, is providing grant funding for energy efficiency, energy conservation and renewable energy projects. The list of available grants changes monthly.

U.S. Department of Agriculture

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is providing grant funding to agricultural producers and small rural business owners interested in improving their energy efficiency or investing in renewable resource technology. Part of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, the grants are available to businesses in population centers of 50,000 or less and to farmers and ranchers.

The department's Renewable Energy for America Program provides loan guarantees and grants for renewable energy systems, energy efficiency improvements, feasibility studies and energy audits. The program is available to agricultural producers and rural small businesses.

Property-assessed Clean Energy Financing

Legislation passed in 2008 (HB 1350) permits local governments to issue bonds to create a fund for loans to finance private renewable energy systems and energy efficiency installations. The bill also authorizes creation of special improvement districts for the purpose of investing in renewable energy resources.

Additional Funding-related Legislation

See appendix.

