

From the Editor

LAST MONTH I HAD the opportunity to participate in a roundtable workshop held October 15 by the Denver-based Alliance for Sustainable Colorado.

The roundtable, part of an all-day summit held in Salida, drew about 50 participants representing business and non-profit leaders, elected officials, alternative and mainstream energy providers, educators and other community members from Chaffee, Lake, Gunnison, Fremont and Saguache Counties.

The purpose of the roundtables was to discuss regional sustainability issues and efforts with other community members, to share and determine top priorities for communities to build sustainable futures, and voice concerns about growth and other issues.

Their website describes the Alliance's mission to, "catalyze the shift to a truly sustainable world by fostering collaboration among nonprofits, businesses, governments, and academia. We are working to advance economic, environmental, and social sustainability in Colorado by building cross-sector alliances and networks."

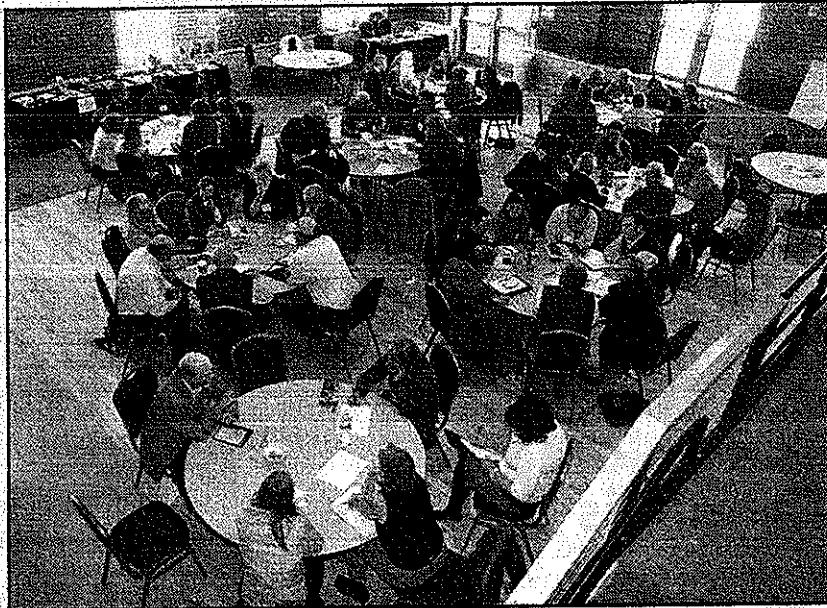
The Alliance was founded in 2004 on the belief that climate change is imminent - requiring cooperative efforts by business, academia, government and private citizens to help reduce its effects.

Workshop participants were asked to join other attendees in small groups to identify specific areas in our region which have the most potential for sustainable growth.

Among the efforts determined to be already in place locally were the farm markets and local foods movements which are quickly becoming central to creating a sense of regional community. This helps

support local businesses and food suppliers and lessens dependency on outside resources necessary to transport and deliver food products to consumers in the region. (see our review of the movie *Locavore* on page 29)

When asked what opportunities are ripe for development, the groups determined, among others, that existing rail lines might be key to sustainability and



Roundtable discussions at the Salida SteamPlant ballroom on Oct 15.

Photo courtesy of The Alliance for Sustainable Colorado

economic growth. Solar energy resources also topped many lists given the amount of sunshine the area receives.

It was also determined that group leadership - helping facilitate and maintain communication and ideas between all groups in the region - was essential to creating any meaningful change.

In the end, most attendees seemed charged-up and ready to help in propelling our region into the uncharted waters that face us in the new energy economy and the global challenges that accompany it.

- Mike Rosso

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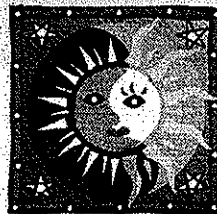
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