

SustainAbility, Dec. 12, 2009
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I just learned about some exciting initiatives taking place in our state by participating in my first Web conference hosted by the Alliance for Sustainable Colorado.

You may recall that this is the group responsible for organizing six sustainability roundtables across the state in 2009 with the Grand Junction event taking place in late June.

About 50 people from all over the state took part in the virtual meeting to share ideas prior to compilation of the 2009 Roundtable Report that will be shared with state agencies, sustainability advocates, state and local policy makers and the governor's office.

Janna Six, education director for the Alliance, moderated the meeting and said discussions about sustainability actually turned out to be about self-sufficiency, stewardship of natural resources and the triple bottom line, taking into account financial, human and natural capital.

She shared a number of interesting projects from around the state that were already under way.

In our area, the Drought Response Information Project (DRIP) was highlighted as one of a few active water conservation projects.

The city of Grand Junction Conserving Our Resources Efficiently (CORE) team also was mentioned.

Heritage Tours are being offered by the Southeast Cultural Historical Regional Tourism organization. The Santa Fe Trail, Sand Creek Massacre, rock art, cemeteries and birding are some of the tours available.

The Fort Collins area is very active on the sustainability front with FortZED, a net-zero energy district that combines smart grid with smart buildings, energy technology and green restaurants.

Colorado State University calls itself "The Green University" and has many labs, institutes and programs to back up the claim. Check out www.green.colostate.edu to learn more.

The National Center for Craftsmanship Deconstruction Program provides training for craft skills and has deconstructed nine buildings in Fort Collins over the past two years.

Not surprisingly, Boulder is a veritable hotbed of sustainability efforts with a long list of accomplishments including ClimateSmart, a loan program to finance sustainable improvements.

For information about Boulder's integrated programs go to www.bouldercounty.org/sustain/index.htm.

Some areas ripe for development span the state. Sustainable agriculture is picking up steam, as are special districts to finance renewable energy and energy efficiency measures for homes and businesses.

In Buena Vista, work is being done on a Guidestone Land-Link initiative that will connect retiring farmers with the next generation of growers to share accumulated wisdom.

The Environmental Protection Agency will form new partnerships with Department of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development to focus on sustainability and offer grants.

This is just a quick sampling of what is already happening in Colorado and on the horizon.

To learn more, go to the alliance Web site at sustainablecolorado.org/programs/Roundtables.php.

Adele Israel is a Grand Junction writer who has been involved in sustainability efforts for some 20 years.

Have a question or column idea for Adele? E-mail her at msdeli@bresnan.net.