

**Alliance for Sustainable Colorado**  
**Statewide Sustainability Roundtable Meeting**  
**December 4, 2009**

**Report**

**Summary**

A **Statewide Sustainability Meeting** was hosted by the Alliance for Sustainable Colorado via phone and web conferencing on December 4, 2009, to 1) summarize sustainability information gleaned from six local roundtable meetings in 2009; 2) collect further examples of successful sustainability projects and opportunities; 3) invite input on a comprehensive report that will be offered to decision-makers, community leaders and media; and 4) invite participation in 2010 Alliance sustainability efforts.

**Participants**

Forty-two individuals from across the state participated in a one-hour call. Participants included representatives from business, government, nonprofit and education sectors and either had participated in previous 2009 Roundtable meetings or represented regions that were not within the regional scope of a particular meeting.

**Sustainability Efforts in Place and Working.** Participants at this meeting identified these sustainability projects as models of best practices which are already on the ground and operating.

• **Education**

- (1) [\*Boulder Valley School District\*](#) is coordinating existing efforts and defining goals and visions around sustainability at a district level for the first time. In 2008, a Sustainability Coordinator was hired and a Sustainability Management System incorporated into operations. Long-standing successful programs like [\*Eco-cycle\*](#) and the [\*alternative transportation program\*](#) are still in place, with some newer programs including: detailing green design in Phase 1 bond projects, transitioning to green cleaning products in all schools, and participating in Xcel's new Smart Grid program.
- (2) The [\*Green Schools Advocacy Committee\*](#), created by the U.S. Green Building Council - Colorado Chapter, is an active group with a goal to reach each of the 172 school districts in Colorado to increase understanding of the benefits of green school buildings, whether new or remodeled. The committee holds an annual Green Schools Summit and envisions holding other events around the state. Their vision is that by 2015, all new and remodeled schools in Colorado will be high-performing schools, making our state a national model and resource.

• **Energy and Resources**

- (1) [\*Garfield New Energy Communities Initiative\*](#): This local government and nonprofit initiative includes CLEER, The Sonoran Institute, Parachute, Rifle, Silt, New Castle, Glenwood Springs, Carbondale, Garfield County, the Garfield

County Public Library District and the Roaring Fork Transportation Authority. Over the next two years, this program will focus on establishing energy efficiency and renewable energy efforts across the county, some of which are greening public facilities, creating renewable energy demonstration projects, establishing a small commercial audit and retrofit program, and developing clean energy financing.

- (2) A San Francisco-based startup, SunRun, has partnered with local Colorado solar providers *Namaste Solar Electric*, *REC Solar* and *Real Goods Solar* to offer [solar leasing](#) to the Front Range and Summit County residential home market. Upfront costs are reduced to as little as \$1000 and a small monthly leasing fee. System recommendation and design, installation, monitoring, and insurance is covered by the leaser.
  - (3) Collaborative efforts among the three major water districts in Routt County over the past year has resulted in a [Water Conservation and Drought Preparedness Plan](#) in place for the Yampa Valley. Implementation of parts of the plan was initiated this summer and included a workshop on xeriscaping and efficient irrigation practices.
  - (4) [Boulder County's Sustainability Practices and Programs](#) are extensive and include: a ClimateSmart Loan Program, Energy Corps, a Green Jobs Pipeline, Zero Waste/recycling, and a Sustainability Education Committee to promote internal employee education. All sustainability programs have a triple bottom perspective and are closely integrated with all other existing programs. The County is taking a holistic approach to serving all sectors of the community so that all programs are feeding into each other. Upcoming programs include a Climate Change Adaptation Plan and moving from a social marketing to a social mobilization approach.
  - (5) ***Uncompahgre Plateau Citizen's Training Project***: This collaborative project between the U.S. Forest Service and the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute trains citizen scientist volunteers to monitor treatments aimed at restoring healthy forest conditions on the Uncompahgre Plateau.
- **Recycling**: The **Recycling Resources Economic Opportunity Act** created a recycling grant program ([RREO Grant Program](#)) that is intended to fund implementation projects that promote economic development through the productive management of recyclable materials. Grants have been approved for Fiscal Year 2010 across the state for community projects. One grant provides garden plastics drop-off sites throughout the metro-Denver region. Another grant will help the City of Grand Junction and its contractor, GJ Curbside Recycling Indefinitely, expand the community-based recycling program and facility to process nine million pounds of recyclable commodity per year. The next call for grants will be published in January 2010.
  - Thriving [Multi-Tenant Nonprofit Centers](#) are found in several locations in Colorado, such as the [Alliance Center](#) in Denver, the [Smiley Center](#) in Durango, and the [Third Street Center](#) in Carbondale. The green remodel of an existing building provides a collaborative home for nonprofits and creates remarkable opportunities for important mission cross-pollination and synergy, while providing a stable, affordable gathering

place to nonprofits and the communities in which they operate.

**Sustainability Opportunities Ripe for Development.** During the statewide roundtable call, participants named the following ideas as priorities which are ripe for implementation when the resources are available.

- [\*The Salida Citizen\*](#), an online publication and tool for building community, provides the *Causes* and *411* pages, which are an ongoing attempt to aggregate information about local resources for sustainability, education, nonprofit and civic issues. Salida Roundtable participants identified *creating a website that links to all local resources on renewable energy projects and sharing resources and experience to avoid duplication of efforts* as an opportunity ripe for development and these resources at *Salida Citizen* could provide that forum. In addition, the [\*Salida Greenmap\*](#) is being developed to serve as 'local clearinghouse' for resources relating to sustainable, ecological and environmental aspects of the community. Conversations with several local schools and resource and sustainability groups have begun to gather information and plan collaborative projects for expanding the Greenmap.
- The **Colorado State University Institute for the Built Environment** project, [\*LENSES\*](#) (Living Environments in Natural, Social, and Economic Systems), has a goal of becoming a recognized framework that guides communities and project teams toward creating living, regenerative built environments. The growing LENSES development team (including natural and social scientists, business and community leaders, and built environment professionals) envisions created environments that produce positive impacts (instead of a focus on 'less-harmful' environments) which enhance People, Planet, and Prosperity. This statewide and potentially global initiative is still in its early development. With proper funding, the framework will be embedded with expert-driven principles, knowledge and metrics during 2010 and be ready for trial implementation in 2011.
- A **Pueblo City-County Sustainability Team** has been formed to develop a community-wide energy strategy. The team consists of staff from both City and County Departments, as well as representatives from Black Hills Energy, Xcel, San Isabel Electric Association, Pueblo Board of Water Works, Pueblo Community College, Colorado State University-Pueblo, Pueblo Economic Development Corporation (PEDCO), Pueblo Workforce Center, Colorado Department of Local Affairs, and the Governor's Energy Office. The beginning of an outline for an energy plan and the formation of sub-committees on specific sustainability topics will be developed in January 2010. Once the specific sub-committees are identified, other community members will be invited to participate.
- The **Boulder ClimateSmart Loan Program** is a property-assessed clean energy program that overcomes many hurdles to residential and commercial energy retrofit hurdles such as up-front capital expenses, personal debt, and short payback periods. However, this program 1) is only open to those that pay property taxes, thereby excluding renters, non-profits, and municipalities; and 2) it requires a popular vote, which allows for the program to get shot down upon another vote. Another option for groups that have their own utility is one where the payback comes through the utility bill instead of property-taxes. This program would cover all building segments and

- eliminates the conflicting owner/renter incentives. This can also be done through waste districts (attached to trash bill) and water districts. Another mechanism is **performance contracting**, which allows for up-front capital costs to be covered and for the payback to come from the energy savings. These savings are actually guaranteed by the energy services company and the financing does not count as long-term debt on the municipalities books, thereby avoiding TABOR issues.
- **Steamboat Springs** has some significant challenges in the region, largely due to the remoteness. One challenge that is being researched is finding a way to get pure glass recycling to market, especially from bars and restaurants (a single stream program exists, but it has limitations).
  - [\*Front Range Ozone Community Plan\*](#). In November 2009, Governor Ritter appointed 29 local leaders to the Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC), with the priority to collaborate, develop and report on options to further reduce vehicle miles traveled, emissions from vehicles, and introduce other measures that yield reductions in emissions from the transportation sector. This effort is an attempt for Denver Front Range to come back into compliance with federal ozone standards.
  - [\*A new federal interagency partnership\*](#) between Departments of Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and the Environmental Protection Agency will be offering joint funding to develop sustainable communities through projects such as improved access to affordable housing, increased transportation options and lower costs, and engaged environmental stewardship.
  - The Governor's Energy Office is investing \$2.3million of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds to hire thirteen **Regional Community Energy Coordinators** across the state of Colorado who will facilitate the design and implementation of a regional energy efficiency and conservation strategy. Coordinators began work in January 2010.