

Businesses Weighing in on Sonoma Clean Power

Retired banking executive Pat Kilkenny convened 45 Sonoma County business leaders at the offices of GHD on October 24 to hear presentations about the economic advantages of Sonoma Clean Power. Kilkenny invited attendees to join Business for Sonoma Clean Power and to urge Sonoma County policy makers to create a local electricity provider that will achieve bold goals.

Co-hosts were Marlene Soiland of Soiland Management, Brad Baker of Coddling Enterprises, Dennis Hunter of Ygrene Energy, and Dick Dowd of the Santa Rosa Board of Public Utilities. Presenters included Rep. Mike Thompson, Marin Clean Energy Chair Damon Connelly, BoDean CEO Dean Soiland, Dennis Hunter, and Dick Dowd. Exchange Bank, Kendall-Jackson, and Memorial Hospital were among the businesses represented at the gathering supported by the Climate Protection Campaign.

“It’s great to bring the business community together so they can learn about the opportunities with Sonoma Clean Power,” remarked Dean Soiland.

Sonoma Clean Power is a proposed program to buy and generate electricity for businesses and residents. This local program will introduce choice and competition in our electricity market where now only PG&E exists.

Business engagement in Sonoma Clean Power is a key objective of the Climate Protection Campaign to ensure that the power provider is financially successful and boosts the local economy as it reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Sonoma Clean Power’s goal is for at least 50 percent of electricity to come from renewable energy sources.



Congressman Mike Thompson makes a presentation about Sonoma Clean Power

The County and cities are now developing a joint powers authority to oversee Sonoma Clean Power. The Water Agency is developing the Implementation Plan to be submitted to the California Public Utility Commission for approval. Sonoma Clean Power is expected to go live in 2013.

Visionary Donors Pledge \$45,000 Match – Gifts Now Doubled

How did Sonoma County become a national climate protection leader? One key ingredient is the vision of donors who encourage others to contribute by making challenge grants that double the effectiveness of people’s gifts. Two such donors are Ren Nelson of Sebastopol, and Jean Schulz, founder of the Schulz Museum. Ren and Jean have pledged to match any gift that comes in this season up to a total of \$45,000.

When asked why she gave this way, Ren stated: “I believe that a match is an efficient and effective way to expand the donor base, once people’s hearts are involved. The Climate Protection Campaign is creating innovative changes. Donate now and double the gift.”

Some donors are choosing to become Climate Sustainers with our monthly giving program. By committing to a monthly gift by credit card or bank transfer, you join a special group of people providing us with consistent support we can count on. If you sign up now for a monthly gift, Ren and Jean will match twelve months worth of contributions. Sign up on our website or give us a call.

WeGo Rideshare Enlists Partners and Users

Congestion, parking, and rising gas prices are propelling commuters to seek transportation options. Fortunately, riders and drivers are discovering WeGo Rideshare, which enables them to share rides. The Climate Protection Campaign is working with Avego, an Ireland-based tech startup, to refine a new smart phone app that pioneers a way for commuters to connect with each other to share rides and the cost of driving.

To recruit users, we are working closely with Agilent Technologies, Medtronic, the County of Sonoma, the City of Santa Rosa, and Santa Rosa Junior College. WeGo Ridesharing gives employees more transportation choices while introducing an exciting approach to accelerate the emerging ethic of sharing resources, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and saving money.

During the first month of this semester, over 350 Santa Rosa Junior College students joined the new ride-sharing community. SRJC student Joelle Gwen May Budinsky describes the program this way:

“Relaxing and reading on the way to school, good conversation on the way home. What’s not to love?”

“We are thrilled to partner with the Sonoma County Transportation Authority and Avego on this innovative ridesharing program that we envision will be a model for communities everywhere,” said Climate Protection Campaign Program Manager Brant Arthur.



Ride-sharing reduces greenhouse gas emissions while building community and expanding transportation options

PBS Documentary Film to Showcase Sonoma County



Executive Director Ann Hancock interviewed for a PBS documentary

In 2001, when founding the Climate Protection Campaign, we had a vision: To do something so amazing that we would inspire other communities to follow suit. We just received the best external validation that our vision is being realized.

PBS documentary filmmaker Rainie Ames came here at the beginning of October after scouring the nation for communities that are creating their own energy and climate future. She identified Sonoma County as the top spot.

In addition to Ann Hancock of the Climate Protection Campaign, Ames interviewed Supervisor Shirlee Zane, Cordel Stillman of the Sonoma County Water Agency, and Alison Healy of Solar Sonoma County.

While she was here we turned the tables and interviewed her. You can find the link to the short video at www.climateprotection.org.

ECO2school Ignites High School Students

Helping students develop leadership skills and build their resolve to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are two goals of Climate Protection Campaign's ECO2school program. Our vision is a movement of empowered youth acting to avert the climate crisis. Students have a decided stake in protecting their future.



Santa Rosa High students bike to school

Students participating in ECO2school start by calculating the emissions produced by the commutes of students at the school. They then roll out a public education campaign urging fellow students to walk, bike and carpool to school. When that is complete, they assess the impact of the education campaign on student commuting and emissions.

"We aren't old enough to vote, but we are old enough to care about our world's future," said Montgomery High student Jo Paine.

ECO2school is now underway in eight local high schools. A team of students leads the effort in each school, partnering with some combination of a social studies class, the statistics class, the leadership class, and the environmental club.

Calpine's Big Supply of Geothermal Resources at The Geysers

Two busloads of people convened by the Climate Protection Campaign trekked up to The Geysers geothermal region on October 13. The tour included a stop at the visitor center in Middletown, which just had a big facelift. The center now has new interactive displays that demonstrate how geothermal energy works. Historical videos show what the operation looked like when large-scale electricity production began in the 1960s. The center also contains a three-dimensional map displaying the resources of the region.

The Geysers is a 45-square-mile formation of high temperature rock in Sonoma and Lake counties. Steam from underground reservoirs drives the largest cluster of geothermal power plants in the world. Calpine operates fifteen power plants in the region, creating enough electricity to power 725,000 homes.

Calpine continues to modernize the power plants and improve replenishment of the steam fields and extraction processes, ensuring production long into the future. Improvements include updating and standardizing control systems that will enhance productivity while automating and modernizing operations. The company expects the current round of upgrades to be completed over the next several years.

In addition to the upgrade of existing plants, Calpine has land use permits for two new power plants. The company is actively exploring sales opportunities for the proposed plants' electric output. The construction schedule for these proposed projects depends upon securing long-term contracts to sell the power and acquiring additional permits.

For upcoming tour times, including tours departing from Sonoma County, visit www.geysers.com or email cgvc@calpine.com.



Tour participants in the control room of a Calpine geothermal power plant

Windsor Energy and Water Efficiency Program

Saving water and electricity in Windsor just got a whole lot easier. Thanks to a new pilot program, customers can use their water bills to finance upgrades such as high efficiency clothes washers and ultra low-flow toilets and showerheads — with no out-of-pocket cost. Participants can also replace their thirsty turf with drought-resistant landscaping, the single most important water saving action for homes.



Efficient washing machines save water and energy

The Windsor Efficiency PAYS® program enables people to make upgrades to their homes through a surcharge on the water bill and an assurance that the savings will be greater than the surcharge. Pre-screened products at special prices, certified contractors, and quality assurance deliver an offer that works for homeowners and renters.

The Climate Protection Campaign has been promoting Pay As You Save® since we identified it in our 2008 Community Climate Action Plan as a game-changing financing model for effective and consumer-friendly resource conservation.

Furthermore, we are spreading this success. Through our work with the Regional Climate Protection Authority, the California Public Utilities Commission recently approved funding to replicate the PAYS model in several Bay Area jurisdictions.

“This is a perfect example of a model program that we incubate in Sonoma County and then export around the country to make a significant dent in greenhouse gas emissions,” said Chris Cone, Climate Protection Campaign energy efficiency expert.

Love Food, Hate Waste

A Small Footprint Involves Minimizing Food Waste.

America squanders 40 percent of its food from farm to fork to land-fill, according to a recent report from the Natural Resources Defense Council. This represents an enormous waste of energy, fresh water, land and money—to the tune of \$165 billion a year.

Revising a flawed food labeling system that causes people to throw out perfectly good food would help shrink this number. We also need a concerted government effort to help individuals and businesses reduce their waste. The U.K.’s “Love Food, Hate Waste” program has saved consumers nearly \$500 million.

One of the most effective changes is to be parsimonious. Shop wisely, eat leftovers, cook the proper amount, and clean your plate. These motherly prescriptions all reduce waste. Here are additional tips that may be less intuitive:

- Shop more often and buy less. By shopping more often you will get fresher, more delicious ingredients and stop forgetting about that salad in the back of the fridge.
- Don’t automatically discard food based on the date. The labels on your food are not your best guide for knowing if things have gone bad. “Use by,” “sell by,” and “best before” are not regulated, and they tend to be overly conservative. Use your nose and your taste buds to decide what’s really good to eat.
- Put trimmings in the green bin. Methane from decomposing food in landfills is a significant contributor to climate change. You can put food scraps – except for dairy and meat – into the green bin. When food is composted in piles with yard waste it does not create the methane that is created with underground decomposition.



DO SOMETHING

New Team Members



Amy McCrary

Our newest staff member, Amy McCrary, joins our transportation team with a wealth of experience inspiring people to change their transportation habits. Prior to joining our staff, Amy worked in Washington, D.C., with Avego, our technology partner for the WeGo Ridesharing project. She has also worked on a North Carolina marketing campaign for a sustainable transportation consultant and headed up the transportation management program for a business association in Atlanta.



Richard Power

We are excited about the addition of Richard Power on our board of directors. Richard is a founding member of Carle, Mackie, Power & Ross. He is a tax attorney whose practice focuses on low-income housing tax credits, real estate, partnerships and tax exempt entities. He is also a national speaker on the low-income housing tax credit. Richard has served as tax attorney for the National Housing Law Project specializing in structuring syndications of low-income housing.



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FALL 2012

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We encourage you to patronize these businesses which actively support climate protection:

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Special thanks to Aldrich Network Consulting for providing IT services. www.aldrichnetworks.com 707-585-3800

The Climate Protection Campaign convenes members of Business for Clean Energy once a quarter to share stories and best practices. To learn more about this program, please contact Barry Vesser at 707-525-1665 x113 or bvesser@climateprotection.org.