

The Green Sheet, August 9, 2008

Five by Five

QUESTIONS:

1. The Energy Summit's in its second year. What do you consider to be its biggest benefit to the Eastern Sierra and the world outside our area?
2. What do you think are the biggest energy challenges facing our local and/or global community?
3. What do you think are the easy and not so easy facets of "being green" in today's world?
4. Someone comes up to you on the street and admits they're clueless on energy efficiency. What advice would you give them to start cleaning up their energy act?
5. President Nixon signed the Environmental Protection Agency into existence in the early 1970s, but many green practices are only now beginning to catch on. What emerging trends jump out as being the most visible and which do you think are still flying "under the radar?"

Rick Phelps is Executive Director of the High Sierra Energy Foundation.

1. The Foundation and Cerro Coso jointly created the Summit in 2007. Generally, the Foundation, through the partnership between Southern California Edison and the Town of Mammoth Lakes, manages the content, while Cerro Coso provides the facility and the college oversight.
2. As we look for better ways to use and conserve energy, it's important to not exclude any options, but rather to consider how they all fit together and benefit both the environment and the economy.
3. Recycling and low energy CFLs (compact fluorescent lamps) are easy. Renewable resources and transportation are not.
4. One step at a time. Start with CFL bulbs. Second step, learn to use your programmable thermostat. Third, install a turbo encabulator in your residence (see www.doc.ic.ac.uk/~ids/dotdot/misc/jokes/turboencabulator.txt).
5. If it's economic and the infrastructure is in place, it's easy to participate. For example, to recycle for \$13 a month (Sierra Conservation Project) without having to sort and deliver to a center is easy and economic. It didn't used to be. Another example is CFL. When the technology first appeared, CFL lamps were expensive and the light was funny. Now CFL usage is cheap, different types of CFL lamps give off different types of light suitable to the application and they last a long time.

Dave Harvey is Chairman of the Board of both High Sierra Energy Foundation and Geothermal Educational Outreach.

1. Bringing awareness of renewable energy applications to our area.
2. Gasoline, because it affects our tourism. Costs of electricity and gasoline today and where they're going. Energy solutions in terms of space heating may play a part in how we deal with heat energy in the future.
3. Easy: being sucked into "carbon footprint credits," the gimmicky aspects. Everyone wants to jump on the bandwagon. Hard part: sticking to it and doing something physical that actually makes a difference.
4. Start at home. It can be simple such as changing light bulbs, being aware of what appliances you have draw too much power. The biggest culprits we have are appliances that draw power even when turned off at the switch, or "phantom loads." You can learn about this phenomenon in a class at the Summit.
5. Most visible: geothermal heating districts will make a major significant difference here. Solar can't be dismissed — it probably has the most likelihood of having success...look at the latest research and development of new panels that are thinner, lighter, more attractive and efficient. Under the radar: hydrogen. It just needs a distribution system and car manufacturers to produce the product. Interestingly, that might happen here in California first.

Deanna Campbell is Director of Cerro Coso Community College's Eastern Sierra College Center.

1. I think the Summit's greatest contribution to the Eastern Sierra is that it gives every one of us a forum for discussion of ideas and an exchange of information about renewable energy and green living. Hopefully, as the Summit continues to grow, the Eastern Sierra community will be able to develop and implement standards in renewable energy, green planning and processes in our community that will be adopted and copied elsewhere. Wouldn't it be tremendous if Mammoth Lakes could be the leading resort community for renewable energy and green living?
2. The greatest energy challenges facing our community are the same ones facing every other community: developing clean energy and sustainable energy sources that are widely adopted, available and affordable. It's a matter of creating an openness and willingness among all community members to explore alternative solutions to our current practices and changing our own everyday habits.

3. The easiest and not so easiest facets are simply being conscious and conscientious. We all should continuously evaluate our own practices and habits: Should we bike to work today? Should we purchase bulk produce instead of prepackaged, prepared produce? Do I need to drive to a meeting to be there in person or can I call in? There are hundreds of simple choices we make daily that can have significant impact over time.

4. Enroll in the High Sierra Energy Summit!

5. Most visible trend: with fuel prices where they are everyone is talking about fuel-efficient vehicles. Flying under the radar: recycling & biodegradable products drive me nuts because we become complacent and think they have no impact. They still require energy to manufacture and create significant waste. Buy products with minimal packaging.

Leslie O'Berry is Director of Special Projects for the High Sierra Energy Foundation. She was integrally involved in planning the Summit.

1. It's a wonderful opportunity for people in our community to educate themselves on all aspects of "green" energy...green building, energy efficiency and renewable energy. By becoming more educated, people can make smarter choices for our environment.

2. Most people are overwhelmed by the amount of information that is out there and have trouble translating it into simple, everyday things that we can all do to conserve energy. You don't have to build a solar array to have a measurable impact on energy use and carbon dioxide reduction. We are also heavily dependent on oil and fossil fuel-based energy sources that it will be a hard transition to renewable resources such as solar, wind and geothermal.

3. "Being green" can be cost-prohibitive for a lot of people, and also a change in lifestyle can take a little effort...

4. Change a lightbulb! Seriously, if every household in the United States changed one (just one!) regular lightbulb for a CFL, it would save enough energy to light 7 million homes and save \$600 million in energy bills PER YEAR! That's HUGE, and really easy. There are lots of other tips, too...use Energy Star appliances, turn down your heat 2 degrees to save 5% per month on your electricity bill, take shorter showers, and make sure your house is well insulated and airtight.

Lisa Isaacs is Environmental Programs Director for Mammoth Mountain Ski Area

1. The Summit provides the public, local and otherwise, with an opportunity to learn how they might tighten up their energy use, as well as workable alternatives to traditional energy systems relying on finite, polluting resources for power.

2. Being able to implement the broad, systematic changes, including new infrastructure and cultural shifts, as fast as we need to in order to have any type of significant counter affect on the global climate change already appearing to be underway.

3. Easy: knowing the "green" path is the right path for today and tomorrow. Hard: often finding that path and/or getting others to follow it. In many cases, it's a new path into the unknown requiring us to work hard and alter many behaviors and beliefs — definitely not the path of least resistance.

4. Conserve energy and resources. We're a country of resource hogs - we consume a LOT more than we need to. Quality, not quantity, should drive more decisions, while still supporting a market-based economy. I really like the newly expanded resource conservation continuum ... Refuse - Reduce - Reuse - Recycle.

5. Water conservation (potable water is truly our limiting factor for growth), green building design and decreasing plastics in our environment. "Below the radar" is a new trend: European governments' "feed-in tariff," which encourages independently generated renewable energy supplies being fed into the electric power grid. If, for instance, I'm generating more privately generated power (from any kind of renewable source) than I can use, I put the excess into the grid and the government gives an economic incentive to me to do that. Started in Germany in 1991, it could make its way here soon.