

Serve Montana Symposium
Focus Areas and Panel of Experts Session: Energy/Environment
February 11, 2010

Facilitator: LaNette Diaz, CASA of Montana

Panelists:

- Kathleen Hadley, The National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT)
- Ben Brouwer, Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO)
- Jono McKinney, Montana Conservation Corps (MCC)
- Sarah Hamlen, MSU Wind Energy Extension Program

Please explain who you are and what your organization does?

AERO – Ben Brouwer – stated that AERO was founded in the late 1980's early 1990's and focused on the family farms. It is now focuses on the food grown in Montana as well as energy conservation. They are using "smaller" projects showing people what it looks like to blow in insulation and install solar systems. They are helping agriculture buy showing the farmers and ranchers how to use less energy. Helping Producers and managers work together on energy conservation. We do this through education and giving tours of places where we have already done a project and it is working well. We help them build community and get the city and county governments involved in the projects. We are working on new state policy to help the farmers and ranchers with their energy conservation needs. We only do small projects so that we can get individual ownership in the projects which help sustain the projects for the long term.

MSU Wind Energy Extension – Sarah Hamlen – stated they are working on larger projects with wind energy. These are Community Wind projects where they can purchase their energy at wholesale prices. They need more community leadership with wind projects. It is a direct payment program which requires local and community ownership of the project. It will have many environmental benefits as well as social benefits. There is a very expensive investment to get a wind farm up and operating and they won't recoup their initial investment for some time but with the proper prior planning on a project the investment will pay off in the future in cheaper energy.

NCAT – Kathleen Hadley – It is a national organization with its root in agriculture. Our focus is renewable energy. We have done demonstration projects at schools to show them how adding solar panels can save them on their energy costs. We have also put solar panels on fire departments and over 200 homes and 10 senior centers. We are working on Montana energy efficiency projects by working with builders to build more energy efficient homes. We offer energy assistance for people living under the poverty level. We have a hotline that people on the street can call to ask for assistance with weatherization or other energy needs. We have formed the Energy Corps with a grant through the Office of Community Service. We are working to get farms to grow more energy crops to make biodiesel and other alternative fuels. The USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) has loans and grants available to help farmers get started growing energy crops. There is also stimulus money available for this purpose also. "Energy creates more jobs than any nuclear energy project."

MCC – Jono McKinney – We are working on inspiring youth to be conservation conscious. There is a backlog of maintenance projects in the parks and forests across the state and we are working to

complete many of these projects. Last year we weatherized over 1900 homes across Montana. Last year jobs for young folks was at 51% (highest ever). There are Jobs bills / Youth Corps Act / Forest Jobs and Recreation Act have helped us grow and expand the number of projects that we can work on this year.

AERO – 60 % of electrical needs in Montana are being met with coal. We are getting the word out regarding the tax rebates that expire this year for buying more energy efficient appliances and weatherizing your homes.

Northwestern Energy provides ½ of the energy in the state of Montana. Northwestern Energy provides rebates for being energy efficient where energy co-ops do not.

GAPS

Small Group Discussion:

What are you currently doing or what could be done to address the gap in services identified by the panel members?

MCC – Need to create more jobs for young people. Need to give back to the community and state. Everyone needs to get involved in order to make a change. Need more community based programs. Need jobs working with the environment.

Federal funds available

Get more local effort involved with projects.

State parks need to utilize the available resources

AERO – Need to find new energy alternatives. Need to reduce energy consumption by 20 to 30 percent. Need more neighborhood and local level projects. Need to make a energy security (action) plan. Also need a common vision. Need more education on resources available to help save energy.

NCAT – Make sure you have the correct information.

Work with Energy Co-ops on energy efficiency.

Better ways of tracking people who need weatherization.

MSU – Need to stop overlooking opportunities for energy efficiency.

Less group think and more individual involvement

Ask the right questions

Risks – vs. - Rewards

Meet objectives

GAP HIGHLIGHTS:

Recycling – Marketing

Leadership

Education

Earth Day – April 22nd, 2010

Global Youth Service Day – April 20-25, 2010

What is going on? And how can youth be involved? Serve.mt.gov

Involving faith based groups for education and outreach

Democratic process in co-ops allow for change.

Renters' resources for energy efficiency

Coordinate with others on energy efficiency

Bring efficiency and conservation down to a neighborhood level.

Community Energy Networks

Generational awareness and habit changes

Other Gaps:

Service learning opportunities in rural areas with electric co-ops (organizing potential)

Efficiency and conservation in rental units, dated trailer homes

Neighborhood scale weatherization assistance

Opportunity for youth to actually put ideas into action

Generational bridging

Co-op reform 0 how to encourage positive change

Cooperate with other AmeriCorps energy programs

Incorporating service learning into energy projects

Developing training programs

Community education

Involving faith-based organizations

Assistance for more people (those that don't qualify)

High light existing successes

Using technology (video, web, etc.) to share information

Get renters and landlords working together

AmeriCorps programmatic nationally

Training green collar jobs

Energy Experts: Learning about saving & benefits

Educate people to perform demonstration projects

Questions:

Energy costs – Co-ops verses private companies

MSU Wind Program?

Canyon Ferry dam verses wind energy

Sage Mountain – demonstration center