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## Area officials ponder going green

### Forum on climate change draws about 100 leaders who swap strategies for cutting power use and becoming energy efficient.

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The first Sacramento regional forum about climate change drew nearly 100 area officials in from heavy rain Thursday to brainstorm ways to cut local global warming emissions.

As many as 32 city and county elected officials attended the series of speakers and discussions at California State University, Sacramento.

Participants got a crash course on the science, economics and politics of climate change as it affects California.

They swapped more than 100 strategies for cutting power use in everything from sewage treatment plants to streetlights and incorporating energy efficiency in everyday land-use decisions.

"It was the first climate change conference I had been to, so a lot of what I heard was new to me," said Peter Hill, vice mayor of Rocklin.

Rocklin was one of 12 cities participating, along with the counties of El Dorado, Sacramento, Sutter and Yuba and the area's major power suppliers – Pacific Gas and Electric Co., Roseville Electric and Sacramento Municipal Utility District.

Officials of Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District and Sacramento Area Council of Governments said they organized the event to help locally elected officials better represent community interests as state regulators and litigators escalate measures to curb heat-trapping or greenhouse emissions of carbon dioxide tied to every corner of the economy.

Top state regulators told participants they have no intention of infringing on local government's control over land use and growth.

Rather, they're looking to give communities expertise, models and money needed to shrink their "carbon footprint."

"Local action will be key to our success. We will provide the tools and support," said James Goldstene, executive officer of the state Air Resources Board, which enforces a state law requiring a rollback in greenhouse gas emissions from all sources to 1990 levels by 2020.

Added Jackalyne Pfannenstiel, chairwoman of the California Energy Commission, "There is no interest or intention or thought about challenging that authority, but a rather a question of how we can work together."

Sam Pierce, a councilman from the Sonoma County city of Sebastopol, presented a detailed look at how his community significantly cut emissions and energy use in municipal buildings and services.

Many of the changes, such as the switch to efficient lighting, will reap savings that more than offset the

retrofitting costs, said Garrett Fitzgerald, director of programs at the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, a nonprofit group in Oakland that advises local governments about ways to reduce global warming emissions.

Some cities in the region have a running inventory of municipal climate change emissions and programs to reduce them.

"There was nothing new for me," Roseville Mayor Jim Gray said of Thursday's conference. "Roseville is already out front. We have a 'green team' of employees from various departments that makes recommendations on how to make our buildings greener and reduce our carbon footprint."

Municipal services, such as garbage pickup and police protection, generally account for less than 5 percent of a community's total warming emissions, experts say.

However, small, well-advertised reductions that save not only the environment but also taxpayers' dollars build public support and confidence for switching to greener lifestyles at home, said Earl Withycombe, who sits on the board of directors for the Sacramento area chapter of Breathe California, a nonprofit public health advocacy group.

"The more models we have of energy efficiency, the more we will fire the public imagination and will to make personal lifestyle changes," Withycombe said.

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