

NEWS

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Biane unveils "Green County San Bernardino" programs *Environmental initiatives strengthen county's status as a green leader*

From its dense alpine forests to its vast pristine deserts, San Bernardino County's variety of natural settings make it unique among California's urban counties and are key to the county's success as a destination for residents, businesses, and visitors.

In that spirit, Board of Supervisors Chairman Paul Biane today unveiled a package of environmental initiatives known collectively as Green County San Bernardino.

"Combined with the landmark global warming measures announced last week and the variety of substantive environmental efforts the county has undertaken throughout the past 20 years, Green County San Bernardino establishes us as a leader among local government agencies in addressing environmental issues," Chairman Biane said today.

Green County San Bernardino includes four proposals that will be considered for adoption by the Board of Supervisors tomorrow as well as an eight-page booklet outlining the county's efforts and offering individual residents and businesses information on how they can join the county in protecting our natural resources and minimizing society's long-term impact on the planet.

Tomorrow, Chairman Biane will ask the Board of Supervisors to approve:

- Adoption of a county policy that would require that new county buildings and major renovations of existing county facilities comply with U.S. Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Silver standards. LEED promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in five key areas of human and environmental health – sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality.

-MORE-

Green County San Bernardino

August 27, 2007

Page 2

- Establishment of the San Bernardino County Green Builder Program as a voluntary green building incentive program for residential construction. Under the SBCGB program, builders who agree to satisfy the requirements of the California Green Builder program would receive priority processing for plan review from the county Land Use Services Department, including guaranteed timelines and priority field inspection service. The California Green Builder program has set goals for significant improvements in energy efficiency, indoor air quality and comfort, onsite waste recycling, and water and wood conservation.
- Waiver of county building permit fees for the installation of solar energy systems, wind-generated electrical systems, tankless water heaters, and highly energy-efficient heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems for existing buildings. The waiver of fees would promote energy conservation, facilitate a reduction in greenhouse gas emission, and reduce the public's reliance on commercial energy sources.
- Establishment of a County website, www.greencountysb.com, to serve as a resource for the public to obtain information on creating and maintaining environmentally friendly buildings, landscapes, and lifestyles. Through this website, the public would have access to the various "green" programs such as the Green Builder Program, the Municipal Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program, and the New Commercial Construction and Renovation LEED Program. The website would also contain information pertaining to energy efficient building permits, useful "green" tips, and information on affordable ways to protect the environment.

"Working with leaders from throughout the region it is clear to me the need to take measures to clean up our air and to take these environmentally sound measures in order to better the health and well-being of our residents," said Supervisor Gary Ovitt, who serves as President of the Southern California Association of Governments and as a Board Member on the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

Green County San Bernardino has already won praise from a key member of Southern California's environmental community, and should garner support from all individuals and groups interested in protecting our planet and our future.

"We commend the innovative Green County initiative," said Dan Silver, executive director of the Endangered Habitats League. "This incentive-based program immediately makes San Bernardino County a regional leader in energy efficiency and green building practices. Citizens will save money on electricity bills and know that they are helping combat global warming."

The Endangered Habitats League, <http://www.ehleague.org/>, is a non-profit Los Angeles-based organization dedicated to ecosystem protection and sustainable land use.

-MORE-

Green County San Bernardino

August 27, 2007

Page 3

The Green County programs also have the support of the Baldy View Chapter of the Building Industry Association, demonstrating that these initiatives strike a rare balance between the concerns of environmentalists and those of builders. That balance is essential to the success of any proposals in a quickly growing region like San Bernardino County.

"Green building means healthier environments, economies, communities, and futures for all of our families and our neighborhoods in San Bernardino County. It's yet another reason we call the American home the American dream," said Todd Tatum, president of the Baldy View Chapter of the Building Industry Association, www.biabuild.com.

"These initiatives continue the County of San Bernardino's proud heritage of fostering sustainable growth and responsible stewardship of our natural resources," Chairman Biane said. "Our goal now is to build upon these programs and continue to work with everyone in our communities to add additional elements under the Green County San Bernardino banner."

Green County San Bernardino builds upon the county's past environmental accomplishments, which include:

- The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan announced on August 21, 2007 to include a countywide inventory of 1990 greenhouse gas emissions, an inventory of current emissions and their sources, a projected inventory of emissions through 2020 attributable to the county's discretionary land use decisions and internal government operations, a reduction target, and mitigation measures to meet the target. The county will amend the General Plan within 30 months to add a policy outlining the county's goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions reasonably attributable to the county's discretionary land use decisions and internal government operations.
- The County of San Bernardino created the state's first regional air quality planning element, which earned the 1991 SCAQMD Clean Air Award, the 1991 CSAC Challenge Award, and the 1993 Southern California Gas Company Partners in Energy Efficiency Award. This resulted in critical policies and procedures that have been integrated into the development review process through the county General Plan and Development Code since the early '90s and reiterated and strengthened in the 2007 General Plan Update and Development Code.
- In 2004, the County of San Bernardino became one of the first counties in the state to launch a fleet of hybrid vehicles, purchasing 20 Toyota Prius sedans.
- Currently, the county Motor Pool has 48 hybrid vehicles in its fleet – 38 sedans and 10 4x4 SUVs. The vehicles average 42 MPG in combined city/highway driving. These vehicles are in such high demand that some county employees arrange their workloads around hybrid availability.

-MORE-

Green County San Bernardino

August 27, 2007

Page 4

- The county is committed to purchasing/providing the lowest emission vehicles available. Research indicates that hybrids produce 90% less emissions than the average gasoline-fueled vehicle, and produce zero emissions when running in electric mode.
- This year, the county plans to purchase 30 additional hybrids, a combination of sedans and SUVs. Long-term, the goal is to add 30-35 hybrids to the fleet every year.
- The county is also exploring the purchase of 10 all-electric trucks later this year. Electric vehicles are considered 100% cleaner than any gasoline vehicle and are ideal for in-town, stop-and-go type driving, where typical gasoline-engine vehicles are least efficient.
- The county has also applied to South Coast Air Quality Management District to participate in a plug-in hybrid experiment later this year. This project proposes converting Toyota Prius hybrids to plug-in hybrids, meaning that when parked the vehicle can be plugged into a standard outlet to recharge the batteries, lessening the amount of time the gasoline engine has to run. Preliminary reports indicate fuel mileage as high as 100 MPG using plug-ins hybrid technology.
- The county continues to research and purchase the lowest emissions vehicles available, even for the conventional sedans. All new sedans purchased by the county are at least Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV) rated or cleaner, which means they are at least 13% cleaner than the average gasoline fueled vehicle. Currently about 33% of the Motor Pool's nearly 1,700 vehicles are ULEV or better, with a goal of at least 45% ULEV by June 2008.
- The County of San Bernardino Regional Parks Department recently obtained 10 electric maintenance carts to replace gas-powered vehicles.
- The County Public Works Department/Flood Control District recently purchased eight solar-powered highway message boards to replace noisy gasoline- and diesel-powered units.
- Public Works also purchased two air vacuums to remove dirt from cracks in the county's roadways prior to repair, replacing the practice of blowing the dirt into the air with air compressors.
- Public Works also purchased five liquid natural gas heavy-duty water trucks, dump trucks, and an asphalt-patch truck to replace diesel-powered units. The county has ordered three additional liquid natural gas heavy-duty trucks in order to remove more diesel-powered units from the fleet. Each liquid natural gas truck reduces greenhouse gases placed in the air each year by approximately 300 pounds and reduces the Particulate Matter by approximately 37 pounds each per year.
- The county plans to purchase seven compressed natural gas heavy-duty trucks to replace diesel-powered units.

-MORE-

- The county has implemented programs to reduce the unnecessary idling of diesel trucks, including using GPS technology to monitor idling.
- The county has received \$100,000 in grant funds from the South Coast Air Quality Management District and currently has a grant request application under consideration for an additional \$250,000 to assist with the future purchase of alternative-fuel heavy-duty vehicles.
- The county's Economic Development Agency is working with the City of Victorville and Inland Energy Inc. to develop the world's first hybrid power plant, which will generate 563 megawatts using 250 acres of solar thermal collectors in combination with natural gas generators.
- For more than two decades the county Human Resources Department has operated an active and effective Commuter Services Program to encourage, coordinate, and reward carpooling, provide information about public transportation and other alternatives to solo commuting. Because the county is by far the largest employer in the Inland Empire with nearly 20,000 employees, these efforts have a very real impact on the quality of our atmosphere.
- The county has applied to the California Pollution Control Financing Authority for a grant of \$250,000 from the Sustainable Communities Grant and Loan Program. If the county is successful in obtaining the grant, the funds could be applied toward the costs to prepare a greenhouse gas reduction plan.