

CEAC meeting minutes – August 17, 2007

The Western N.C. Community Energy Advisory Council (CEAC) held its third meeting Friday, Aug. 17, 2007, at Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce.

Members present included:

- Robin Cape (Asheville City Council)
- Lee Galloway (Waynesville town manager)
- Jeff Loven (French Broad EMC)
- Karl Kuchta (Unimen)
- Michael Shore (Environmental Defense)
- Margie Meares (Clean Air Community Trust)
- Terry Albrecht (Waste Reduction Partners)
- Dave Hollister (Sundance Power Systems)
- Rick Lutovsky (Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce)
- Patrick Fitzsimmons (American Red Cross)
- Paul Szurek (Biltmore Farms)
- Lavoy Spooner (AT&T)
- Chuck Pickering (Biltmore Estate)
- Harry Harrison (YMI Cultural Center)
- Vernon Daugherty (A-B Tech)

Jo Anne Sanford facilitated the meeting. Larry Shirley, director of the State Energy Office, also attended, and provided an overview of the future requirements for state government building efficiency. Much of the rest of the meeting was spent in discussion, rather than hearing presentations.

Ken Maxwell, Progress Energy community relations manager for Western North Carolina (who has since left the company to pursue other professional opportunities), provided an overview of electric system issues, including the adequacy of the electric system in light of record demand in August, as well as issues associated with the limited operation of the company's Walters hydroelectric plant, due to the persistent drought conditions.

Chris Edge, Progress Energy's manager of Demand-side Management and Alternative Energy Strategy, discussed the company's top 5 demand-side management and efficiency initiatives:

- Water heating component load control
- Heating load control
- HVAC maintenance program
- Duct testing and repair program
- Replacement of incandescent lighting with compact fluorescent bulbs (CFL)

Several members provided input on the CFL program. Members suggested:

- Educational opportunities to help dispel negative notions and impressions about CFLs from when the technology was new;
- Educational programs targeted specifically at environmental science classes in area middle and high schools;
- Targeted events and potential partnerships to focus attention on the CFL promotion;
- Increased advertising and marketing with a personal focus to reinforce the fact that many people are already using CFLs (and with information on proper recycling of spent bulbs);
- Investigation of opportunities for incorporating wholesale Progress Energy customers (e.g., Town of Waynesville customers) into CFL programs;
- Local government resolutions in support of the bulb changeout.

The group also discussed energy efficiency in new construction. Among the issues is how to train architects in designing energy-efficient homes and commercial buildings, how to increase consumer demand for geothermal energy, solar water heating and other efficiency initiatives. The group asked for more information on what the green home of the future will look like, and how to facilitate and accelerate the evolution.

Several members had questions and suggestions for the group's scope, including discussion of how Progress Energy will make money in a more energy-efficient regulatory environment. Members also asked that the group continue to focus on broad future energy issues – including the expected gap in resources required to meet the region's energy needs over the next two decades – even as they discuss near-term objectives.

Lee Galloway (Town of Waynesville, a wholesale customer of Progress Energy Carolinas) said he is not convinced Progress Energy can meet the needs of growth through conservation alone, in light of the recent extreme heat, and resulting curtailment of industrial energy usage.

Several members of the audience also spoke during a public comment period. Discussion topics included overcoming user concerns about switching to CFLs, efficiency opportunities in water heating technology and a broader look at specific incentives to entice customers to participate in efficiency and DSM programs over the long term.

The group's next meeting will be Friday, Sept. 14, 8:30-10:30 a.m. at UNC-Asheville.