

BEACON

SPOTLIGHT
AWARD

WINNER

BEST PRACTICE
ACTIVITIES



County of Sonoma

Sustainability Best Practice Activities



INSTITUTE FOR
LOCAL GOVERNMENTSM

Promoting Good Government at the Local Level

County of Sonoma

California communities are leading the fight against climate change. From small projects to large-scale programs, cities and counties are making great strides to create healthy, sustainable and economically prosperous communities. Participants in ILG's Beacon Program serve as leaders in this effort, making measureable contributions to reducing energy and greenhouse gas emissions, and sharing their sustainability best practices.

This document represents a collection of activities your agency has completed in 10 areas of sustainability. While local governments have a wide range of choices available to address climate change, these activities represent the unique opportunities and values in your community. These voluntary actions are essential to achieving California's goals to save energy, reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and create more sustainable communities.

SPOTLIGHT AWARD

Areas of Accomplishment		SILVER LEVEL	GOLD LEVEL	PLATINUM LEVEL
	Agency GHG Reductions			2013 (29%)
	Community GHG Reductions			
	Agency Energy Savings		2013 (10%)	
	Natural Gas Savings			
	Sustainability Best Practice Activities	2013		
	Beacon Award			

Cities and counties throughout the Golden State should be proud of the accomplishments made through the hard work, innovation and collective community action. The Institute for Local Government applauds your achievements and thanks you for your continued participation in the Beacon Program.

The Beacon Program is sponsored by the Institute for Local Government and the Statewide Energy Efficiency Collaborative (SEEC). SEEC is an alliance between three statewide non-profit organizations and California's four Investor-Owned Utilities. The Beacon Program is funded by California utility ratepayers and administered by Pacific Gas and Electric Company, San Diego Gas and Electric Company, Southern California Edison and Southern California Gas Company under the auspices of the California Public Utilities Commission.



Energy Efficiency and Conservation Activities

Silver

1. Comprehensive Energy Project: Cash neutral from day one, this project will reduce utility bills by 33%, \$1.6 million per year, with a savings of \$38 million over the 25-year life of the project. 38 energy efficiency measures were completed in 24 county-owned buildings, including lighting retrofits in 20. HVAC upgrades in four; a major upgrade of the central mechanical plant. The county received a Challenge Award from the California State Association of Counties in October 2012 for this project.

Gold

2. Since 2010, Sonoma County Energy Watch (SCEW), a local government partnership with Pacific Gas and Electric Company has helped customers save over 6,600,540 kWh/yr and 1,700 tons of CO₂, enough to power 330 homes for a year. This has created an annual savings of approximately \$890,000 each year.
3. The county is currently retrofitting 75 parking lot lighting fixtures to LEDs through PG&E's On-Bill Financing (OBF) Program, 64 of which will be "bi-level" motion sensors incentivized through the ETAP program. The project will save the county approximately \$18,000 per year.

Platinum

4. The City of Healdsburg partnered with the Sonoma County Energy Independence Program (SCEIP) to support the city and its municipal electric utility's energy efficiency program goals. SCEIP provides oversight to the city's activities and efforts with regard to the administration, development, management, evaluation, and promotion of energy efficiency programs.





Water & Wastewater Systems Activities

Silver

1. As part of the Comprehensive Energy Project (CEP), water retrofits at the Main Adult Detention Center (MADF) and Juvenile Justice Center (JJC) save over one million gallons of water per month.

Gold

2. The Sonoma County Energy Independence Program, in partnership with the Town of Windsor and other local entities, launched a pilot on-water bill financing program called Windsor Pay As You Save, or Windsor PAYS. The program provides water and energy savings upgrades for Windsor residential properties that provide immediate utility bill savings, new water/energy savings appliances, and drought resistant landscaping with no upfront cost or debt. Windsor PAYS received an Honorable Mention as a promising program by ACEEE and the Alliance for Water Efficiency (AWE) in January 2013.

Platinum





Green Building Activities

Silver

1. On August 23, 2010, Sonoma County's Valley of the Moon Children's Home Phase 3 Addition was awarded Silver Certification in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) by the United States Green Building Council. This award reflects the first county building in Sonoma County to achieve such status and demonstrates the county's ongoing leadership in sustainability. To attain LEED certification, the project successfully managed construction waste, recycled over 95% of waste materials, incorporated elements that encourage the use of alternate transportation, decreased night time light pollution, increased the use of natural light, decreased storm water runoff and overall water use, and assimilated systems and designs that will optimize energy use year after year.

Gold

2. The county's Permit and Resource Management Department has adopted CALGreen Tier 1 standards and is preparing for the coming of the International Green Construction Code (IGCC).

Platinum





Waste Reduction and Recycling Activities

Silver

1. A pilot composting program at Sonoma County detention facilities is the first “vermiculture” composting (worm farm) program in a detention facility in the state. Approximately 1,200 pounds of food waste per month is being diverted from the waste stream at the Main Adult Detention Center (MADF) and the North County Detention Facility (NCDF) kitchens. This program is located at NCDF and is managed as part of the jail industries program with a potential benefit of reducing inmate recidivism as they learn how to be “green”.

Gold

2. The Sonoma County Waste Management Agency expanded a Residential Fluorescent Lamp Take-back Program with PG&E by adding several drop-off sites throughout the county.
3. The Sonoma County Waste Management Agency (SCWMA) released a draft Environmental Impact Report examining the impacts of a proposed ordinance on carryout single-use plastic bags. The report is on the SCWMA website and is open for public comment through March 22, 2013. The proposed ordinance could go into effect as early as July 2013.

Platinum





Climate-friendly Purchasing Activities

Silver

1. Sonoma County's Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy gives the county the ability to award bids to green vendors or for green products if they are within 5% of the lowest bid. To be certified green, the vendor must meet independent third party certification.

Gold

2. The county allows local vendors within 5% of the lowest bid a chance to match the bid, recognizing that using local vendors often means a reduction in the carbon footprint associated with long distance travel and that local vendors help support our local economy.
3. The Purchasing Department's Surplus Program has helped the county to reuse approximately 435 surplus items since July 2010, and has saved approximately \$70,000 since July 2010 by using and re-using surplus office supplies and furniture. Surplus has also donated roughly 255 items to non-profit organizations since July 2010.

Platinum





Renewable Energy and Low-Carbon Fuels Activities

Silver

1. The county installed a 750 kW solar array at the Juvenile Justice Center (JJC) Photovoltaic Solar Array, which provides approximately 55% of the electric power. The 3,190 roof and ground mounted American-made panels are designed to generate more than 1.1 M kWh per year and save the county about \$137,000 per year.

Gold

2. The county installed an additional 706kW PV system at the JJC through a Power Purchase Agreement. Together with the previously installed system and several energy efficiency upgrades, the county's Los Guilicos campus is now one of the first, if not the first, zero net electricity municipal campuses in the State of California.
3. As part of the Comprehensive Energy Project, the County installed a 1.4 MW fuel cell cogeneration power plant. The fuel cell has been designated "Ultra Clean" by the California Air Resources Board (CARB), meets approximately 90% of the County Center's electricity needs, generates over 10,000 kWh/year, produces 45 billion BTU's per year, and reduces GHG emissions by 69% as compared to power from the grid.

Platinum

4. Sonoma County Energy Independence Program (SCEIP) is the leading Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program in the nation. It provides financing paid back through the property tax system and enables property owners to make responsible and affordable energy improvements, stimulates the local economy, continues to create green jobs, and improves home values.
5. The county completed a Community Choice Aggregation feasibility study in the fall of 2011.
6. The County of Sonoma has entered into a one-year direct access agreement with 3 Phases Renewables to deliver 100% renewable power to county facilities. A mix of electricity generated by 85% wind and 15% biomass will power seven county facilities in Santa Rosa and Petaluma throughout 2012.





Efficient Transportation Activities

Silver

1. The county is converting its vehicle fleet to electrical and hybrid vehicles. We have 9 plug-in vehicles and over 200 hybrids. The County of Sonoma was recognized in June 2011 as the most electric vehicle ready community in the Bay Area. Fleet Manager, Dave Head, was awarded "Sustainability All-star" by Green Fleet Magazine, an online and print publication dedicated to sustainable fleet operations nationwide.

Gold

2. Installing a vehicle charging station infrastructure including 18 EV charging stations. The EV charging stations are located throughout Sonoma County at both County-owned and leased facilities. Some stations are for county use only; others are for both public and county use.
3. The county has partnered with the nonprofit Climate Protection Campaign and the Sonoma County Transportation Authority to implement a real-time ridesharing pilot program for County employees and the residents that utilizes smart phone technology to reduce VMTs.

Platinum

4. The county revised its free bus pass program to offer free transit passes to all Sonoma County employees regardless of work site, trip purpose or employment classification (permanent, temporary, volunteer). Employees may board any Sonoma County Transit bus by presenting a valid County identification badge to a bus operator. Trips are recorded and the County is billed for the number of trips taken at an agreed upon per-ride fare.
5. The county installed 28 electronic bicycle lockers at the main county administration center. The lockers are funded through a grant from the BAAQMD and MTC and are expected to be available for public use in May 2013 in conjunction with the annual Bay Area Bike to Work Day celebration.





Land Use and Community Design Activities

Silver

1. In December 2011, the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District approved a \$215,000 grant to LandPaths for site development of the City of Santa Rosa's Bayer Neighborhood Park and Garden under the Matching Grant Program. The Project seeks to improve the health of Sonoma County residents by connecting people and resources to grow their own food in service of creating a vibrant, resilient, and sustainable food system.

Gold

2. Energy & Sustainability staff is assisting the Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD) to update the Development Code for energy efficiency and renewable energy. Within the development code update, staff and a consultant have completed a GHG in lieu fee study to assist developers and the County with AB 32 requirements that projects not exceed a GHG emissions threshold of 1100 tons.
3. In January 2013, the Permit and Resource Department (PRMD) launched the PRMD Citizen's Academy, a series of lunchtime meetings on the planning and permitting process in an effort to present information to interested parties to help them more effectively navigate the permitting process. The sessions will provide crucial information and offer attendees an opportunity to share ideas on improving the process and customer service.

Platinum





Open Space and Offsetting Carbon Emission Activities

Silver

1. On May 10, 2011, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors launched an innovative partnership with a host of local non-profits to create and operate the first ever community food garden located on Larson Park, part of Sonoma County Regional Parks system. The action caps a long term effort to harness public and private resources to create easier access to healthy locally grown foods.

Gold

2. Hosted the first ever Sonoma County Food Forum to provide an opportunity for diverse stakeholders to come together and propose policy recommendations that will support local agriculture for consideration by the Board of Supervisors.
3. In April 2011, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors funded the final phase of improvements for the Riverkeeper Stewardship Park in Guerneville. The \$128,500 in redevelopment monies funded construction of 3,500 square feet of trails, educational facilities and an interpretive center; provide native plant re-vegetation and landscaping; and complete construction planning for adjacent properties in need of improvement.

Platinum

4. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors directed the County's Regional Parks Department to begin negotiations for the temporary management of Annadel State Park. If approved, the county could assume management of Annadel on July 1, 2012. Annadel and four other state parks in the County are scheduled to close July 1st due to state budget cuts targeting 70 California parks.
5. Sonoma County's Open Space District and the City of Healdsburg finalized a deal to purchase and manage the 199 acres atop Fitch Mountain in Healdsburg for public recreation use such as hiking and biking. A comprehensive management plan is being developed to include elements such as neighborhood and community involvement, trail development, reduction of invasive species, fire prevention and public safety planning.
6. Sonoma County's Regional Parks opened a new 2.4-mile trail in the Laguna de Santa Rosa for hiking and bicycle use through the unique landscape of Sonoma County's largest freshwater wetland. Future trail segments of the envisioned 12-mile multi-use and pedestrian-only trail will be completed when funding is available.





Promoting Community and Individual Action Activities

Silver

1. In July 2011, the county launched the Healthy Business Recognition Program, a voluntary certification program that recognizes employers for developing and implementing exceptional employee wellness programs, and is aimed at helping establish a culture of wellness in the workplace throughout Sonoma County.

Gold

2. Sonoma County Regional Parks and iGROW Sonoma are offering a series of low and no-cost gardening workshops this spring and summer to help residents learn about soil care, planting techniques, irrigation and other fundamentals.
3. In collaboration with PG&E, Energy Upgrade CA, Solar Sonoma County, and the cities of Santa Rosa and Petaluma, we launched the Energy Smart Business Program - a pilot direct mail and saturation campaign to help business owners decrease energy, water and waste costs.

Platinum

4. Sonoma County received recognition by the National Association of Counties (NaCo) for implementing its iWORKwell recognition program, a voluntary certification program that recognizes private employers for developing and implementing exceptional employee wellness programs.
5. The county is working with several local partners to develop a "Greentivities" exhibit hall at the 2013 County Fair. The exhibit is intended to attract, entertain and educate fairgoers on different aspects of sustainability including energy efficiency, renewables, food, transportation, waste water and many more.





© 2019 by Institute for Local Government
1400 K Street, Suite 205
Sacramento, CA 95814
916-658-8208
www.ca-ilg.org

