

They've been here for us because we were there for them



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JULY 20

5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.



Mountain View Meadows / 25 yrs

Green strategy OK'd to boost sustainability

County commissioners to use energy mitigation funds for initiatives.

By Allie Gross

Teton County commissioners outlined a strategy for improving sustainability in the county in the next decade.

"I am really proud of our organization for taking leadership like this," Commissioner Natalia Macker said, "and being willing to prioritize what I see as a value of our community."

The strategy focuses on three areas: climate and energy, procurement and waste, and water, air quality and ecosystem health. It sets specific goals for 2030 — such as reducing per-employee waste production and potable-water use by 20 percent — and suggests strategies for reaching those targets.

The climate and energy section focuses on reducing energy consumption and greenhouse emissions at county facilities and from its fleet of vehicles.

There are goals to reduce landfill trash and consider waste when purchasing goods and services.

"Taking a look at not just the price of a product, but understanding the life cycle and environmental impacts it may have," Director of General Services Lauren Long said.

The final section is about protecting water quality and quantity, and indoor and outdoor air quality.

"This is the one where I would say we have the most room for improvement," Long said, "because we are not actively tracking our water usage."

The plan is the product of a yearlong cooperation between county departments and a consulting group. Long presented the plan to commissioners June 26, and it was officially approved at the county's Tuesday meeting.

Long said funds from the Energy Mitigation Program, which collects fees from new development to offset energy consumption, will pay for the program. The program has more than \$3 million available. Future funding is contingent on development in the county.

The General Services office will coordinate the administration of the funds throughout county departments.

"We want to be strategic about the

Targets for 2030

- Climate and energy**
- Reduce facility and fleet greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent
 - Reduce the average energy use intensity of county facilities by 40 percent
 - Increase renewable energy generation capacity by 30 percent
 - Reduce fleet fuel use by 40 percent

Waste and procurement

- Reduce per-employee county waste production by 20 percent
- Divert a minimum of 60 percent of the county's internal waste from landfills
- Establish and implement a countywide environmentally preferable purchasing policy

Water, air and ecosystem health

- Reduce potable water use by 20 percent
- Optimize efficiency of irrigation systems
- Optimize outdoor equipment to reduce emissions from harmful air pollutants
- Develop sustainable best practices around indoor air quality
- Develop sustainable best practices for actively managed county land

way we're using it," Long said. "Instead of just doing one-off projects, we want to take a look at the county as a whole."

Long said the plan is in line with other steps the county has taken in the recent past, including the launch of the Energy Mitigation Program and the Road to Zero Waste initiative.

Commissioners said they were glad to see the county leading by example on sustainability. Macker said that the strategy reflects the community values outlined in the 2012 town and county Comprehensive Plan and that trying out initiatives at the county level first could impact future policymaking.

"I think by doing it ourselves first, we will add experience and credibility to future changes that might come down the pipeline," Macker said.

The next step is collecting data on measures that the county doesn't have information on, such as air and water quality, to develop a foundation for developing policies and procedures.

Contact Allie Gross at 732-7063, county@jhnewsandguide.com or @JHNGcounty.

THOROFARE

Continued from 28A

use in the Teton Wilderness over the

many helicopter trips were anticipated.

Moran resident and ecologist Debra Patla wrote that human improvements in the Thorofare and Upper Yellowstone