

# **3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Beacon Award Special Session League of California Cities Annual Conference September 7, 2012**

## **Making the Case Locally for Sustainability: Highlights from Small Group Leadership Conversations**

### **Local Sustainability Projects**

Fifty participants from cities across California shared brief details about local sustainability projects of which they are especially proud. Projects described include the following.

- Agency building energy efficiency retrofits that save money.
- Pedestrian bridge to open-up downtown.
- Streetlight LED retrofit project.
- Teaching businesses how to be more sustainable.
- Home energy retrofit financing program.
- Working with community to reduce waste and extend life of landfill.
- Tracking energy and fuel use to share actual reductions with community.
- Energy generated from alternative fuels provides revenue.
- LEED gold building constructed to save agency money.
- Promoting local action through annual green expo to educate community about sustainability opportunities.
- Wastewater treatment plant uses cost-effective fuel cells to generate power and methane capture.
- Streamlined solar permitting process makes it simpler to install solar PV systems by residents.
- Created citizens' committee to address sustainability.
- Power purchase agreements for installing solar photovoltaic systems on agency buildings.
- Create safe routes to schools to make walking safer options for children and families.

## **Messaging Themes that Resonate with the Community**

Many table conversations emphasized the same messaging themes, even for distinctly different local projects. Key themes include the following concepts.

- It's all about saving taxpayer money.
  - Communicate that substantial savings have been achieved.
  - Energy efficiency and sustainability projects save money, thus enabling the agency to provide better services for residents.
  - Provide actual numbers, not vague reporting; dollars saved and costs avoided.
  - Buy-in from public for sustainability and green building policy comes from education about cost-effectiveness and cost-avoidance.
- Micro-messaging is a way to tell the story and educate the public about what the agency is doing.
- Sustainability and energy efficiency create new jobs in community.
- Getting traction from press about a project helps educate residents and translates into buy-in by the community.