

## Recognizing Leadership (July 2011)

Cities and counties throughout California are participating in the Institute for Local Government's sustainability and climate change recognition program, the Beacon Award: Local Leadership Toward Solving Climate Change. Launched in August 2010 as the first of its kind in California, the Beacon Award recognizes and celebrates cities and counties that:



- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- Save energy;
- Adopt policies and programs to address climate change; and
- Promote sustainability.

Currently, 19 cities and counties are Beacon Award program participants, working toward achieving one of three award levels. ILG invites all cities and counties to participate as a way to highlight their local leadership and accomplishments with their residents and share best practices with other communities. There is no deadline or fee to participate in the Beacon Award program; the program is ongoing.

Ventura Mayor Carl Morehouse says, "The Beacon Award program is a great initiative, and we encourage other cities throughout the state to get involved."

Noting her city's 15-year history of reducing greenhouse gas emissions while supporting local green economic development, Chula Vista Mayor Cheryl Cox says, "The Beacon Award will provide an opportunity for Chula Vista to exchange ideas and lessons learned with other local governments, community partners and energy utilities."

Citrus Heights Mayor Jeannie Bruins sums up her city's participation: "The city decided to participate in the Beacon Award program because we realize what an important issue sustainability is. And as we take a leadership role, we are setting an example for our community as well as for other communities."

Participating cities and counties can highlight their agencies' accomplishments on their own individual participant pages on the ILG website and showcase key projects through the ILG resource pages for best practices in climate action and sustainability.

Besides striving for the silver, gold and platinum Beacon Award levels, participating cities and counties are eligible to receive statewide recognition for interim accomplishments. For example, reducing energy use by 5, 10 or 20 percent in agency facilities through energy efficiency retrofit projects makes a city or county eligible to receive interim recognition. Highlighting interim accomplishments helps participating cities and counties demonstrate their leadership locally and statewide while working on reaching the silver, gold or platinum award levels.

Beacon Award participants agree that sharing information with colleagues and local residents is an important element of the program. "It's not just about getting the award as much as it is giving cities an opportunity to learn from each other about the types of things they are doing that protect the environment and help out the local economy," says Ken Pulskamp, city manager of Santa Clarita, a Beacon Award program participant.

Yolo County Supervisor Matt Rexroad concurs. "When we started looking at this through our General Plan process, we discovered tremendous things that our staff were doing on their own," he says. "It was good financially, it was good for the environment, and it was just the right thing to do."

The Beacon Award program is funded by California utility ratepayers and administered by Southern California Gas Company, San Diego Gas and Electric Company, Pacific Gas and Electric Company and Southern California Edison, under the auspices of the California Public Utilities Commission.

*This whitepaper was adapted from an article in the July 2011 issue of Western City magazine.*

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PROUD PARTICIPANT



Local Leadership Toward Solving Climate Change

# Join These Leading Communities Achieving Local Sustainability



**Matt Rexroad, Supervisor, Yolo County**

"I encourage people to take a look at what you are doing and through the Beacon Award, tell your story. We're participating in the Beacon Award program because we are seeking affirmation for the things we've done here in Yolo County."



**Bob Brown, Community Development Director, San Rafael**

"Sustainability is a much bigger issue than just reducing greenhouse gas emissions. San Rafael is now in the process of creating a sustainability element of our General Plan."



**Betsy McGovern, Redevelopment Project Manager, Tulare**

"We're excited to be the first city in the San Joaquin Valley to participate in the program. We're hoping to move forward as a collaborative effort with other communities, large or small, to implement sustainable programs and policies throughout the Valley."



**Steve Pougnet, Mayor, Palm Springs**

"Sustainability is integrated into the City of Palm Springs; we make resource conservation a top priority in our community. Participating in the Beacon Award Program provides Palm Springs an opportunity to showcase our great programs and projects while providing a benchmark for success."



**Cheryl Cox, Mayor, Chula Vista**

"Chula Vista is proud to be the first city in San Diego County to participate in the Beacon Award. It is a natural fit for the city because it creates a framework to build upon past work and to measure future progress."



Learn more at:  
[www.ca-ilg.org/BeaconAward](http://www.ca-ilg.org/BeaconAward)

## CURRENT BEACON AWARD PARTICIPANTS (as of June 17)

- |                |               |               |             |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| Apple Valley   | Palm Springs  | Santa Clarita | Tulare      |
| Citrus Heights | Pleasanton    | Santa Cruz    | Ventura     |
| Chula Vista    | San Rafael    | Simi Valley   | Woodland    |
| Hayward        | San Ramon     | Sonoma County | Yolo County |
| Livermore      | Santa Barbara | South Gate    |             |



INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

[www.ca-ilg.org](http://www.ca-ilg.org)

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