



## **COUNTY OF LAKE**

### **MARKETING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

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#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 3, 2009**

#### **LAKE COUNTY ANNOUNCES COMMUNITY-BASED ENERGY POLICY COUNCIL**

LAKE COUNTY, CA –The Lake County Energy Policy Council recently gathered for the third in a series of working sessions focused on improving energy efficiency as part of an overall countywide sustainability effort. These sessions provide a forum for members from across the community, including representatives from community organizations, County agencies, and the general public, to connect and give input into the newly formed Council's efforts. In August 2008, the Lake County Board of Supervisors approved a proposal to initiate sustainability and local self-reliance efforts in Lake County, after which, the Energy Policy Council was formed.

While Lake County's overall sustainability initiative consists of four main elements: energy, food, education and transportation, the Board of Supervisors directed staff to form two initial groups to address energy and food, which Denise Rushing, District 3 Supervisor and sponsor of the sustainability effort, felt were the most pressing and least addressed issues in current county policies.

"We are a rural county, rich in resources but vulnerable to transportation and fuel interruptions in the event of economic problems or natural disaster situations," Rushing said. "We are determined to bring to bear the considerable talent we have here in the County to make our community resilient to disruptions and fluctuations in fuel costs."

Addressing energy use and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through grass-roots community involvement is a key element of the County's comprehensive sustainability effort.

The goal of the Energy Policy Council is to engage the public in active discussion and harvest ideas of all sectors, including energy-related companies and other local businesses, farmers and ranchers, local tribes, school districts, and community-based non-profit groups as well as interested individuals. The resulting community goals will be used to develop a set of recommendations to promote energy security, which will be presented to the Board of

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Supervisors for possible policy action.

“Each area of our society has something to offer,” said Energy Policy Council Chair Clelia Baur. “We’ll be taking input on opportunities, obstacles, and outside-the-box approaches that will strengthen our local energy systems, keep costs down, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.”

Lake County is a recognized leader in the area of renewable energy. Since 1997, the Lake County Sanitation District (LACOSAN) and industry partners – the Northern California Power Agency (NCPA) and Calpine Corporation – have been operating a wastewater reuse system that pumps treated wastewater effluent to The Geysers geothermal generation complex. The Geysers is the world’s largest complex of geothermal energy in the world and is located in the mountains between Middletown and Cobb.

In February 2009, Lake County celebrated the dedication of additional new solar facilities, making this the largest of any county in California, an achievement recognized on March 19, 2009 with a Green California Leadership Award in the energy innovation category for its innovative recycling program, demonstrating Lake County’s commitment to sustainable energy policies.

In 2007, the Board of Supervisors voted to join the Cool Counties program of the Sierra Club by pledging to reduce GHG emissions by 80 percent by 2050; a two-percent reduction per year. The new solar facilities are expected to offset more than 131 million pounds of carbon dioxide emissions over the next 30 years, helping Lake County to reach its Cool County pledge.

In addition to submitting policy recommendations to the Board of Supervisors, the Energy Policy Council’s agenda for the near term includes connecting qualifying rate-payers with assistance programs, providing the public with up-to-date energy conservation information, and home and business weatherization programs.

“Lake County has made strategic investments in progressive energy infrastructure and processes, and the forming of this group reflects that focus. I am proud of the work that the Council is doing to enhance our energy security,” said Lake County Administrator Kelly Cox.

“This is just one example of our community working together to address serious issues that affect us all,” Rushing said. Recent public-private coalitions in Lake County include a task force that has successfully responded to the threat of invasive Quagga and Zebra Mussels, a Fire Safe Council that initiated a comprehensive fire prevention

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and response plan tailored to the County's rural character, and the formation of a Food Policy Council to address issues of food security and farm retention.

The Lake County Energy Policy Council meets monthly at the Lake County Courthouse in Lakeport. The next meeting will be April 24, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. For more information about the council, please contact Clelia Baur at (707) 998-1961.

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