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Climate Wise turning heads across nation

City's voluntary energy-saving program ranks in top 50 in country

The city of Fort Collins' innovative energy-saving program known as Climate Wise is generating some national attention.

Last week, the Fort Collins Climate Wise Program was selected as one of the top 50 programs in the nation during the 2008 Innovations in American Government Awards competition. More than 1,000 local, county, tribal, state and federal programs applied for the recognition.

Climate Wise is a city government program that provides resources to local businesses and organizations to help them reduce greenhouse gas emissions by promoting waste reduction, save energy, choose alternative transportation, conserve water and prevent pollution, according to www.fc.gov/climatewise.

Climate Wise was selected to the top 50 after undergoing several rounds of evaluation from practitioners and policy experts at Harvard Kennedy School and other institutions.

The strength of Climate Wise is that it is a voluntary program, not a regulatory mandate. Businesses learn that saving energy is not only the right thing to do for the world, but the right thing from a fiscal perspective. The focus is to help "businesses tackle modern-day business challenges that impact bottom lines and the quality of life in Fort Collins (www.fcgov.com)." The response has been significant.

So far, nearly 90 partners have accessed Climate Wise resources, saving nearly 3 billion gallons of water and diverting 69,000 tons of waste from the landfill. Organizations have saved about \$12.5 million by participating in such projects, according to a city statement.

The Innovations in American Government Programs seeks to share innovations and government initiatives around the world. Finalists from the top 50 programs will be announced June 3. Winners will be announced in September.

City officials who have advocated for Climate Wise as well as local partners are applauded for participating in an effective and soon-to-be emulated program.
