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Local businesses make real impact

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For the Coloradoan*

"If [companies] believe they are in business to serve people, to help solve problems, to use and employ the ingenuity of their workers to improve the lives of people around them by learning from the nature that gives life, we have a chance." - Paul Hawken

A group of 75 companies reduced Fort Collins' carbon footprint by 82,421 tons of CO₂e in 2007. That's equivalent to reducing 1 million vehicle roundtrips between Fort Collins and Denver or planting 6 million trees or taking 227,000, 60-watt light bulbs in use 24 hours, seven days a week out of service. It saved their companies \$4.5 million in the process.

These innovative companies are partners in the Climate Wise Program, a city of Fort Collins voluntary program designed to support local businesses and organizations committed to protecting the environment through greenhouse gas emission reductions and saving money.

Tangible successes such as these can only come from a genuine commitment to a sustainable philosophy embraced by all members of an organization. Top management may set the course, outline broad parameters and authorize infrastructure investment. But it's the employees who believe in the environmental, economic and social benefits to their company and community who roll up their sleeves to shape the eco challenges that change organizational behavior and meet aggressive goals.

Climate Wise partners understand this. Whether it's a green challenge designed by employees on their own or with the guidance of Climate Wise's Green Works, the results are impressive.

Take platinum-level partners, who must achieve a rigorous set of green behaviors, incorporate sustainable activities and keep their eye on the ball for continuous process improvements. Through Green Works, platinum partners are challenged to educate employees and offer tools for taking practical, measurable actions to become better environmental champions at work and home. Green Works was piloted last year, and employees embraced the concept.

Anheuser-Busch's "Hop-A-Ride" employee challenge led to 48 new carpoolers and 20 designated carpool parking spaces. Avago Technologies' Climate Wise Employee Challenge resulted in a 67 percent overall reduction of cans and bottles in the trash. And The Neenan Company through its Dude, Where's My Trash Can employee challenge decreased CO₂e related to waste reduction by 86 percent.

This year, nine local companies achieved the platinum-level status and have been recognized as leaders in environmental stewardship and greenhouse gas reductions. They are Anheuser-Busch, Avago Technologies, Café Ardour, Clean Air Lawn Care, Compliance Partners/Seven Generations, Land Images, Inc., New Belgium Brewing Company, Inc., The Neenan Company and Poudre School District.

For more information on how employees are using ingenuity to assist their companies reduce waste, improve energy efficiency, conserve water and reduce transportation usage, visit the

Climate Wise Program at www.fcgov.com/climatewise
