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## Bath sets sights on reducing the city's carbon emissions

[Bob Kalish@TimesRecord.Com](mailto:Bob_Kalish@TimesRecord.Com)

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BATH — Now that the City Council has approved a resolution calling for the city to "take a leadership role to minimize the community's energy costs and maximize energy efficiency," it's up to local businesses and residents to do their part, according to one of the writers.

"We're trying to lead the charge," said Erika Helgerson, the city's community relations coordinator and co-author, with Cool Communities intern Brooks Winner, of the resolution. "But now the entire community must do their piece to help reduce energy usage."

Helgerson has worked for the past year with the Cool Communities committee, a local branch of a nationwide grassroots organization dedicated to reducing carbon emissions one community at a time. They have spent a year compiling data and research for their report, titled City of Bath Energy Inventory and Climate Action Plan.

Other communities that have signed off on reducing energy use have

**According to the Energy Inventory** and Climate Action Plan created by Erika Helgerson and Cool Communities intern Brooks Winner, the following breakdown shows which sectors of the Bath community created which shares of greenhouse gas emissions in 2007: Residential, 39.2 percent; commercial, 13.8 percent; industrial, 25 percent; transportation, 19.8 percent; and other, 2.2 percent.

The breakdown adds up to 127,772 tons of carbon dioxide emitted, and 1,384,423 million British Thermal Units (MMBTU) of energy consumed.

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begun by signing the U.S. Mayors' Agreement for Climate Protection, aimed at reducing energy use to below 1990 levels by 2012. But the mayors' agreement was deemed inappropriate for Bath because the city might not be able to meet those standards within the suggested time frame.

Instead, Cool Communities, Helgerson and Winner fashioned a resolution they thought councilors could support, based on its 45-page report. The resolution was approved unanimously at last week's City Council meeting.

The report contains de-tailed analysis of the city's energy use arrived at by way of a detailed inventory of 2007 figures. Data from that inventory were entered into special Clean Air and Climate Protection (CACP) software from the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI).

Anne Burt, one of the organizers of the local Cool Communities committee, said the resolution from the city is an important model for the 18 other communities in the state that have signed on to the Cool Communities goals.

"This gives us support to move forward," Burt said. "I agree with City Manager (Bill) Giroux, who said he

didn't want this to be put on a shelf and forgotten. With the passage of this resolution, we now have concrete goals to work toward."

The resolution recommends that city government pledge to take a leadership role to minimize the community's energy costs and maximizing energy efficiency through the following measures:

- Continue to periodically inventory the city's use of all forms of energy through audits that identify improvements that will increase energy efficiency by retrofitting city facilities with energy efficiency.
- Promote habit changes among employees to reduce energy use and increase recycling in city facilities.
- Consider land-use policies that preserve open space to maintain a compact urban community.
- Continue to promote alternative transportation options, including public transportation, walking and bike trails.
- Continue to explore the use of economically viable alternative energy sources, including the production of biofuels, methane recovery and waste and biomass-to-energy technology.
- Purchase only Energy Star and other energy efficient equipment and appliances for city use.
- Consider requiring that all city funded new construction and renovations meet the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED

certification program or the Maine Housing's green building standards.

- Increase fuel efficiency of city vehicles through managing the size and composition of the city's fleet, purchasing alternative energy vehicles when appropriate and available, and educating city drivers on operating the fleet to conserve fuel, including reduction of idling.
- Continue to increase recycling rates and reduce waste.
- Maintain and expand a healthy public tree population in the city.
- Support community education programs to inform the public about energy-related choices.
- Set a target emissions reduction of 2 percent each year, with the goal of reducing carbon emissions by at least 20 percent by the year 2018.

That's quite an agenda, but Helgerson said the city already has a head start.

"We've already been doing some of the recommendations," Helgerson said. "We're replacing old light bulbs with new efficient ones, we're working with Efficiency Maine to audit our buildings (and) we're looking for ways to reduce our consumption."

She said the city and its residents need to take the long view.

"Some of these recommendations are more expensive in the short term," she said. "But in the long run, you not only use less energy but you save money, too."

A meeting of the Cool Communities committee and volunteers is scheduled for today at 7 p.m. at City Hall Auditorium.

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