

## Bath takes an energy inventory



by **Gina Hamilton**  
**Coastal Journal staff**

BATH - A year ago, Bath Cool Communities, a local group of citizens concerned about global warming, made a presentation to the City Council about climate and energy concerns. At the time, fuel was expensive, but still falling within rational limits. Cool Communities asked the City to create a Climate Action Plan, and to sign the U.S. Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement, which had already been signed by mayors and city officials from many cities from coast to coast, in every state of the union. The agreement is based on reducing energy use to below 1990 levels by 2012.

At the time, Bath did not sign the agreement, but asked the Cool Communities committee to work with City Employees and the City Manager to create a Climate Action Plan for Bath.

On Wednesday, Cool Communities returned to present their findings.

The report was created by Bowdoin intern Brooks Winner, with Ericka Helgerson, who is the Community Relations Coordinator for the City.

The report was broken down into five sectors - residential, commercial (which includes Bath municipal functions), industrial, transportation, and waste.

Together, all five sectors emitted 127,772 metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> and consumed 1,284,423 MMBtu of energy during 2007, which is more than twice the average for a city of its size. One reason why Bath may be using so much energy and emitting so much carbon is that the housing stock in the City is very old, and may have substantial issues with winterization. Another reason may be that most homes in Bath are heated by oil, one of the more carbon-intensive fuels.

Residences accounted for the vast majority of both emissions and energy use. Forty-three percent of the community's energy use was by residential properties, and 39% of emissions.

Commercial enterprises and the government, including school buildings, accounted for 13.8% of the City's emissions, and 12.9% of the energy usage.

The emissions from industry, primarily BIW, accounted for 25% of all emissions, and 19.9% of energy use.

Transportation in all forms produced 19.8% of the emissions, and 23.5% of energy use.

Methane gas, produced by decaying solid waste in the landfill accounted for the remaining 2.2% of greenhouse gas emissions. The landfill flares about 85% of its landfill gas, reducing emissions considerably. If it were not flaring such a high percentage of the methane, emissions from the landfill would be six times what they are today.

When considered alone, municipal functions, including schools, accounts for 6.6% of the total community emissions, and 4.6% of energy consumption, a fairly low figure considering the age

and condition of the City's schools.

The City was lauded for steps already taken, including the purchase of energy efficient appliances, the institution of "no idling" policies among vehicle fleets, the use of LED lighting where possible, and making recycling a priority for both residents and the municipality. The institution of flaring at the landfill alone has made a considerable dent in greenhouse gas emissions. The schools have made their own greenhouse gas assessments and enacted a number of measures to reduce emissions and energy.

In addition, BIW has received the Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence six times between 2000 and 2008 because of their commitment to prevent pollution and reduce their carbon footprint.

More steps are clearly needed, however.

The Council adopted a resolution, specific to Bath's unique situation, to begin to bring the City in line with the Mayors' Agreement for Climate Protection.

Recommended steps included having professional energy audits for public buildings and following recommendations; replace all lighting with CFL bulbs or T-8 fluorescents, considering solar, wind, and geothermal energy for municipal buildings or the City at large, gradually replacing the fleet with hybrids, and looking at options for harnessing the methane gas from the landfill.

The community should be encouraged to do whatever is necessary to make homes more efficient, and the City should sponsor education programs to help residents improve their own energy efficiency.

To help with transportation emissions and energy use, the City should sponsor programs that promote walkability and bikeability, including making sure that there are bike paths and sidewalks throughout the City.

The next step is to put together an energy committee to look at all the possible options. Helgerson is establishing a committee made up of staff and Cool Communities members. "We encourage other members of the community to join the committee," she said. Helgerson can be reached at 443-8330 x 223, or by email at [ehelgerson@cityofbath.com](mailto:ehelgerson@cityofbath.com).

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