

## **Steamboat Partners with the Colorado Carbon Fund**

In recent years, lingo such as ‘carbon footprint’ and ‘carbon offset’ has been buzzing around communities alike. When we hear these words, do we actually understand the full meaning? What is a carbon footprint? Do we all have one? How does it relate to the bigger picture of global warming and climate change?

These questions are asked frequently and it is important to understand the terminology behind them. To offset means to “neutralize,” “balance,” or “cancel out.” When we emit carbon dioxide into the environment through driving or heating our homes, carbon offsetting is a way to counteract this through funding projects which will compensate for emissions occurring at another source. This allows individuals to engage in a sustainable energy lifestyle by:

- Measuring emissions
- Reducing emissions through energy efficiency and renewable energy
- Offsetting unavoidable emissions through programs like the Colorado Carbon Fund (CCF).

## **Colorado Carbon Fund**

In August 2008, the Colorado Governor’s Energy office (GEO) started a program called the Colorado Carbon Fund (CCF). Colorado is the first state to have a carbon offset program in the country. It is an educational campaign providing Colorado residents and businesses information and resources to take steps toward reducing their carbon footprint. GEO’s Colorado Carbon Fund will:

- Support energy efficiency
- Support renewable energy projects in Colorado
- Develop a funding source for community based projects
- Help to meet the state’s Climate Action Plan goal to reduce emissions 20% by 2020 and 80% by 2050

Colorado is leading the nation in green energy and sustainability projects. In partnerships with smaller communities, Steamboat Springs has the opportunity to support and benefit from this program. The CCF program has provided the Yampa Valley with \$10,000 to support outreach and educational activities around climate and energy issues.

Susan Innis, Colorado Carbon Fund Program Manager for the Governor’s Energy Office exclaimed, “The CCF is excited to be working in partnership with several Yampa Valley area organizations on our Project C Educational Campaign. Together we can help raise awareness of what individuals and business owners can do to help reduce emissions that contribute to climate change. We’ll provide tools and resources through the community so that folks can understand what actions can help them save money and preserve the environment.”

## **Local Action**

CCF offsets can be accessed in two ways - through the Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association’s Sustainable Business Program, and from the Yampa Valley Sustainability Council. Both entities will work on various outreach and awareness programs, and they both have similar goals: to help preserve the planet for future generations.

### **Sustainable Business Program and CCF**

The Steamboat Springs Chamber's Sustainable Business Program is supporting the CCF through education, awareness, and hands-on consulting to local businesses. The CCF will be one of a number of options offered to businesses to help offset their carbon emissions. This effort will be done via newspaper articles, press releases, websites, e-newsletters, and events, such as the Economic Summit creating awareness, education, and money to offset carbon emissions.

"One of the components of the Sustainable Business Program has always been to educate businesses on how they can evaluate and mitigate their activities related to their carbon footprint. Toward that end, the CCF Outreach program is a perfect addition to raise awareness relative to the efforts of the GEO Programs, specifically Project C," said Lyn Halliday, President of Environmental Solutions Unltd, the consultant for the program.

### **Yampa Valley Sustainability Council and CCF**

The Yampa Valley Sustainability Council (YVSC) has been meeting and planning with the CCF to launch the program to the residents and visitors in our region. The goal for YVSC is to reach the broadest audience possible of locals and visitors via educational booths, quick and easy options for purchasing mini-offsets, outreach to schools, events and more. "We have collaborated with a variety of partners and will continue to do so as the program gains momentum," said Angela Ashby, YVSC Chair.

Some local programs and projects will be funded from the 20% reinvestment monies the community will receive back from CCF. "One of the bonuses to this program is that the money stays in Colorado and has the potential to bring forth small scale local renewable energy projects to our region. This is a great program for our state and our community," said Ashby.

### **What you can do?**

The simple motto, "It takes a village to raise a child" can be applied to the challenge of preserving our community's natural resources and beauty. We need to help Mother Nature, and every person can play a key role. Below are three easy steps to follow:

- THINK:** Use the online calculator to measure the greenhouse gas emissions from your energy use, driving, and air travel at <http://www.coloradocarbonfund.org/explained-individual.html>
- ACT:** Take simple steps to reduce your energy consumption – you'll lower emissions and save money on your energy and fuel. Examples – take shorter showers, turn off lights, carpool or use public transportation to drive less.
- FUND:** For the emissions you can't reduce on your own, donate to the Colorado Carbon Fund. The money will be used to support projects that reduce emissions right here in the state of Colorado.

