



Pima County & City of Tucson

MEDIA RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Global Earth Hour Celebrated Locally

What do the Golden Gate Bridge, Pima County Administration Building, and Tucson City Hall have in common? They are all “going dark” to show concern over global warming as part of the World Wildlife Fund’s second annual “Earth Hour” event. Earth Hour takes place around the world on Saturday, March 29, 2008, from 8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

During Earth Hour, public agencies, businesses and individuals around the world will turn off their lights in a symbolic gesture to demonstrate that by working together, communities can make a difference in the fight against global climate change. Participating cities include Chicago, San Francisco, Atlanta, Phoenix, Copenhagen, Toronto, Bangkok, Melbourne, Brisbane, Tel Aviv, Manila and Vancouver. The Pima County Health & Welfare Building along with the six Tucson City Council Ward Offices will also turn off their lights during Earth Hour.

Residents in Pima County can make their own impact during Earth Hour simply by turning off unnecessary lights and electronics and switching one incandescent light bulb to an Energy Star-rated compact fluorescent light bulb. If every household in Pima County changed out one bulb during this one-hour event, our community would collectively eliminate 152 million pounds of greenhouse gas emissions during the next year, according to an EPA formula. “This would be the equivalent of removing the annual emissions of about 13,000 cars from Pima County roadways,” said Tedra Fox, Sustainability Manager for Pima County government. “In addition to benefitting the environment, participating households would save approximately \$30 in energy costs over the life of the light bulb,” Fox continued. And since unshielded lights waste energy, create glare, and interfere with viewing the night skies, residents can install shields and motion sensors to maximize the efficiency of their outdoor lights while improving visibility.

Other local agencies such as Kitt Peak National Observatory and the University of Arizona are joining Pima County and the City of Tucson in the Earth Hour event. The observatory has alerted their network of citizen scientists in southern Arizona to make measurements of the night sky before, during, and after the Earth Hour event, similar to their recent Globe at Night (<http://www.globe.gov/GaN/>) campaign for people around the world to measure the quality of the night sky in their local communities. The University of Arizona is educating students living in residential halls to turn off lights when they are not being used.

What to do during the hour without lights and TVs? How about stargazing? The reduction in lights should help bring more stars and planets into view in your backyard.

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What is Local Government Doing to Reduce Global Warming and Be More Energy Efficient?

Pima County's Sustainability Initiatives – Participation in Earth Hour is one more step in Pima County's ongoing commitment to sustainability. In May 2007, the Pima County Board of Supervisors adopted a series of sustainability initiatives which will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, like carbon dioxide, believed to be a major cause of global warming. The Pima County Resolution calls upon the County to meet 15% of its energy needs using renewable resources by 2025. In addition, at least 50% of the County's fleet vehicles are slated to run on environmentally-friendly alternative fuels by 2010.

In furtherance of the resolution, County-funded buildings will now be designed and constructed to meet the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) "Silver" standards. The LEED rating system awards points to buildings based on attributes such as water and energy efficiency. The County is also encouraging private homebuilders to "go green." Earlier this month, the County launched the first residential "green building" standards in Southern Arizona. This new program provides guidance to homeowners and builders on how to build healthful, energy-efficient, and water-conserving homes.

City of Tucson Sustainability Initiatives – The City of Tucson's sustainability efforts are being driven by the goals in the U.N. Urban Environmental Accords (Accords) and the U.S. Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement (MCPA) which the Mayor and Council adopted in 2005 and 2006, respectively. Both the Accords and the MCPA address the importance of municipal energy efficiency. The goals include a 25% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and an increase in renewable energy sources. The U.S. Department of Energy selected the City of Tucson as one of 13 Solar America Cities in the nation in 2007. This award came with a 2-year grant to support the City's solar energy efforts, and the City now has a dedicated Solar Coordinator.

The Mayor and Council adopted LEED Silver standards for all new City-owned buildings and renovations of greater than 5,000 square feet in 2006. The recently dedicated Conservation Learning Center at Reid Park Zoo is expected to receive a LEED Platinum certification, achieving the highest standard in the LEED rating system.

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Actions to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions At Home

Making a few small changes in your home and yard can lead to big reductions of greenhouse gas emissions and save you money. Explore this list of nine simple steps you can take around the house and yard to reduce greenhouse gas emissions:

1. Change 5 lights

Change a light, and you help change the world. Replace the conventional bulbs in your 5 most frequently used light fixtures with bulbs that have the ENERGY STAR and you will help the environment while saving money on energy bills. If every household in the U.S. took this one simple action we would prevent greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions from nearly 10 million cars annually.

2. Look for ENERGY STAR qualified products

When buying new products, such as appliances for your home, get the features and performance you want AND help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. Look for ENERGY STAR qualified products in more than 50 product categories, including lighting, home electronics, heating and cooling equipment and appliances.

3. Heat and cool smartly

Simple steps like cleaning air filters regularly and having your heating and cooling equipment tuned annually by a licensed contractor can save energy and increase comfort at home, and at the same time reduce greenhouse gas emissions. When it's time to replace your old equipment, choose a high efficiency model, and make sure it is properly sized and installed.

4. Seal and insulate your home

Sealing air leaks and adding more insulation to your home is a great do-it-yourself project. The biggest leaks are usually found in the spaces below floors and above ceilings. If you are planning to replace windows, choose ENERGY STAR qualified windows for better performance. Forced air ducts that run through unconditioned spaces are often big energy wasters. Seal and insulate any ducts in attics and crawlspaces to improve the efficiency of your home. And don't forget to insulate your hot water heater. Not sure where to begin? A home energy auditor can also help you find air leaks, areas with poor insulation, and evaluate the over-all energy efficiency of your home. By taking these steps, you can eliminate drafts, keep your home more comfortable year round, save energy that would otherwise be wasted, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

5. Use green power

Green power is environmentally friendly electricity that is generated from renewable energy sources such as wind and the sun. There are two ways to use green power: you can buy green power or you can modify your house to generate your own green power. Buying solar green power is easy, it offers a number of environmental and economic benefits over conventional electricity, including lower greenhouse gas emissions, and it helps increase clean energy supply.

6. Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle

Recycle your newspapers, beverage containers, paper and other goods. Use products in containers that can be recycled and items that can be repaired or reused. Bring your own

reusable bags to the grocery store to reduce the need to make plastic or paper bags. In addition, support recycling markets by buying products made from recycled materials. Reducing, reusing, and recycling in your home helps conserve energy and reduces pollution and greenhouse gases from resource extraction, manufacturing, and disposal.

7. Be green in your yard

Use a push mower, which, unlike a gas or electric mower, consumes no fossil fuels and emits no greenhouse gases. If you do use a power mower, make sure it is a mulching mower to reduce grass clippings. Better yet, change your lawn to desert landscaping with native vegetation to conserve water and reduce the need for fertilizer and pesticides. Composting your food and yard waste reduces the amount of garbage that you send to landfills and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Smart landscaping can save energy, save you money and reduce your household's greenhouse gas emissions.

8. Use water efficiently

Saving water around the home is simple. Municipal water systems require a lot of energy to purify and distribute water to households, and saving water, especially hot water, can lower greenhouse gas emissions. Look for products with EPA's WaterSense label; these products save water and perform as well or better than their less efficient counterparts. There are also simple actions you can take to save water: Be smart when irrigating your landscape; only water when needed and do it during the coolest part of the day, early morning is best. Turn the water off while shaving or brushing teeth. Do not use your toilet as a waste basket - water is wasted with each flush. And did you know a leaky toilet can waste 200 gallons of water per day? Repair all toilet and faucet leaks right away.

9. Spread the Word

Tell family and friends that energy efficiency is good for their homes and good for the environment because it lowers greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. Tell 5 people and together we can help our homes help us all.

(Reprinted from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency website)

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