

Article published Oct. 3, 2007

Leon to host climate forum

By Bruce Ritchie
DEMOCRAT STAFF WRITER

Leon County is hosting a public meeting Thursday to discuss how to address global climate change at the local level.

The meeting is part of the county's new membership in an international group that supports reductions of greenhouse gas emissions, Leon County Commissioner Cliff Thael said. It begins at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at the Leon County Public Library.

As a member of the group called ICLEI Æ Local Governments for Sustainability, the county agreed to participate in its National Day of Conversation on Climate Change, Thael said. The event is being held in 65 communities across the country. The meeting could be a springboard to a larger local climate change summit, Thael said. He attended such a meeting in Orlando last week that attracted more than 800 people.

"It was a very sobering meeting. There were also some things that gave one hope," Thael said. "With a concerted effort, we can begin to turn this thing around."

Leon County officials will discuss their efforts to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions caused by energy consumption, said Kim Dressel, the county's director of management services. The county has bought hybrid Ford Escape SUVs and is testing in trucks the use of fuels made from petroleum and soybean oil. The county is also paying \$4.5 million to a contractor to find more than that amount in energy savings within 12 years.

County Commissioner Bob Rackleff said the county should promote land-use and transportation planning that reduces energy use. He said the county's response to climate change now "is more symbolic than anything else - and is useless."

The Planning Department plans to present information on its planning for "greenway" trails in Leon County and pedestrian, bicycling and mass-transit access in the urban area. n

What: National Conversation on Climate Change

When: Thursday, 6:30 to 9 p.m.

Where: Leon County Public Library, 200 W. Park Ave.

climateconversation.org