

Titles: Sonoma County, CA is making smart investments in energy to better prepare their community for the future.

Titles: Among several funding sources, Sonoma County, CA was fortunate to be able to leverage \$2 million from the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program to make several transformative investments

Grant Davis, General Manager for the Sonoma County Water Agency, CA: We have the coastline, we have the redwoods, we have rolling hills, and it's just a wonderful place to live and work. Sonoma County is blessed with the natural assets and likewise, our community is charged with stewarding those natural resources.

Valerie Brown, Commissioner for Sonoma County, CA: We decided early on that we really wanted to make a commitment to energy efficiency, to reducing greenhouse gases and we did that through nine resolutions from the cities and one from the county.

Title: Energy Efficiency Projects

Grant Davis: Sonoma County has been investing all kinds of renewable energy, whether it's wind power, solar, geothermal

Valerie Brown: building retrofits, xeriscape, in putting photovoltaics in some of our county facilities.

Grant Davis: One of my favorite projects is something called the Farms to Fuel project, where we're taking the waste from the chicken producers, a highly potent material that is a waste product right now that that is ending up in the waterways and in certain cases being trucked out of the county. We're gonna collect all of that, bring it into one spot, put into a fuel cell, and create energy – up to six megawatts of electricity on one location. The beauty of that is the by-product is something – it's a soil amendment that you can actually put back onto your property and improve soil conditions. It's a renewable energy source, it's going to take Sonoma County and the Water Agency to Carbon Free Water by 2015 so that every molecule of water that the Water Agency delivers to our customers will be provided with renewable energy. Its goals like those – dramatic reductions in carbon – that allow is to create jobs, protect the environment, and provide a healthier community.

Valerie Brown: When we're talking about energy efficiency, it's hard sometimes to quantify what your return on investments going to be because you've outlaid a lot to get something back later on. We first noticed that return on investment meant something to our residents when we put forth the program that dealt with people's ability to audit their homes for what kind of energy they were using and being able to tell what they might be able to do produce energy savings within their own homes.

Grant Davis: Sonoma County has the largest energy independence program in the country and that is something that we're very proud of. It's about a \$50 million dollar program where the local community is actually invested in permanent infrastructure improvements on residences and businesses. So the first

step is actually analyze what's happening in your home, to do an audit to see where the energy efficiencies could be improved. That's the first step and often that is where your investment goes. So it'd be simple things like a roof, dual pane windows.

Valerie Brown: People were excited about it. We had a program that we into place that allowed folks to outlay the money for actually doing the projects and then it would be transferred to their property tax and paid over a period of time.

Title: Benefits to the Community

Grant Davis: We have actually created jobs in our community in the very sector that's been hammered by this recession – the plumbers, the roofers, the folks that are installing these improvements onto residential homes and businesses. And so we're actually driving down our carbon footprint and improving our local environment and creating jobs at the same time.

Valarie Brown: Putting in a solar project, changing out windows, doing things on the small or large basis meant something to people in terms of doing the right thing, one, and two, they knew that down the line it was going to make a difference for the community in which they live. I think that return on investments is not just a dollar amount these days. It's about what you can do to create a healthy community for your children, for the future, and for where you live at the current time.

Title: The Future

Grant Davis: I'm very confident about the future. For example, the Golden Gate Bridge was actually built in the Depression by the very same people from Sonoma County and counties north of the Golden Gate Bridge. If you can build the Golden Gate Bridge in the Depression, you can actually secure our future with energy independence programs like the Energy Independence Program or individuals that are making a commitment to protect our environment.

Valerie Brown: You can't disconnect living healthy, eating healthy. We have farm programs that capitalize on that. We have trails that you can walk, we have iWalk programs, iGrow programs, and I think the totality of that says to every person who lives in Sonoma County, we're all on the same page. We believe that your grand children and the grandchildren that follow that are important to us today. I think that's an incredible commitment that we've made.

Grant Davis: I want my daughter and her granddaughter to have a future that's better than what we've inherited and I'm confident with the actions that we're talking about today, the citizens of Sonoma County and the County's north of the Golden Gate Bridge, along with the colleagues in our network across the U.S., that we'll in fact drive down the carbon footprint, we'll be able to restore our economy and protect our environment for future generations.