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January 13th TESC Presentation

In 2008 a group of individuals came together to create Thurston Climate Action Team or TCAT. We wanted to take on projects that would move Thurston County toward lower greenhouse gas emissions. At the outset, we said we wanted to work with a wide range of partners.

Our first effort was to apply for an ARRA grant to create an organization that would assist homeowners and businesses in achieving greater energy efficiency. Since we didn't have the capacity to handle a federal grant and support an organization we approached the Thurston Economic Development Council to partner with us. They were used to handling grants and had accounting and human resource capabilities. At the time, an Olympian newspaper editorial said we were kind of "strange bedfellows, an outfit with climate in its name and the economic development council."

It turned out to be a great partnership. We created Thurston Energy. It has assisted hundreds of homeowners in improving their home's energy efficiency and is still a program within the EDC. It is now hiring additional staff.



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The legislature passed a bill requiring cities along I-5 provide more opportunities for electric vehicle charging in their zoning codes. Puget Sound Regional Council was charged with designing the appropriate ordinance. When TCAT contacted the local jurisdictions they found none were on track to meet the deadline. TCAT proposed that it facilitate the development of local zoning to meet the deadline. A TCAT representative got approval to be a representative of Thurston Regional Planning in the development work. The TCAT rep worked with Puget Sound Regional staff and contractors to perfect the ordinance. TCAT held period meetings with jurisdictional representatives to keep them up to speed. Net result? All jurisdictions met the deadline, making it easier for the owners of electric vehicles to install charging stations. **Partners: PSRC, TRPC, Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, and Thurston County.**

Many residents of the City of Rainier work in the northern part of the county. A steady stream of single occupancy vehicles heads north every morning and south every afternoon. Clearly, there was an opportunity for ridesharing or carpooling. At the same time, Rainier needed to do some analysis of its traffic and streets. Rainier had no money. TCAT approached the Saint Martin's Engineering Department to see if they could help. They agreed to take on the traffic analysis and rideshare lot as a class project. The students got the experience of making presentations to the Rainier City Council and conducting the analysis. A win, win. The students had a real



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world-class project and the city got the analysis, including a rideshare lot, they needed. Now, they're trying to identify funding for the goals. **Partners: St. Martin's and City of Rainier.**

The greenhouse gas inventory is an outstanding effort. In order to develop plans and projects, TCAT needed to know more about greenhouse gas emissions in the county. In this instance we partnered with The Evergreen State College and Puget Sound Energy. Evergreen provided the student talent and PSE, the data. The result was the first look at where the emissions were coming from. The analysis included the county and each of the cities and towns. The plurality of emissions comes from structures. Nearly the same amount comes from transportation. The data became the basis for work by Thurston Regional Planning Council in its Sustainable Thurston Project. TCAT members participated in that effort. **Partners: PSE, TESC, TRPC, LOTT, Thurston County.**

Following Sustainable Thurston's report, it became clear that we needed a plan to reduce greenhouse gasses and, likely, a funding source for that plan. TCAT proposed to conduct a statistically valid survey of Thurston County residents on their attitudes regarding energy, energy efficiency and climate change. Thurston County and the LOTT Clean Water Alliance contributed funding for the survey. **TCAT brought together The Evergreen State College, Saint Martin's University and**



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South Puget Sound Community College as partners in the effort. Funding from LOTT and Thurston County.

As an outgrowth of the Sustainable Thurston Program, Thurston County created Thurston Thrives. It consists of several groups addressing things like housing, health and the environment. It addresses several issues related to TCAT's interests. In a unique effort, TCAT proposed we create a special sub-group, pulling members from related groups to look at energy generations, energy efficiency and climate change. The goal is to develop a plan of action for Thurston County. What types of projects would move us forward and how would they be funded? **Partners: county, cities, environmental groups and interested citizens.**

For the last several years, TCAT has sponsored the Thurston Solar Tour. It's a self-guided tour of about ten or twelve solar installations. The hub is usually a commercial installation like the Olympia Library, Sunset Air or the Sebula Hall at Saint Martin's University. **There, partners like Generations Credit Union, Olympia Federal Saving, South Sound Solar, Sunset Air, and others are available. At each location, an expert backs up the homeowner when it comes to technical questions.** We're currently working on the 2016 tour, in September.



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Last year, we sponsored a home energy upgrade demonstration in Tenino. **Partner:**
Community Action Council.

Today we'll hear about issues large and small. One of the things we must do is assist in changing attitudes about climate change. We need to do that together. I hope it's evident that TCAT has a focus on facilitation and collaboration. We look for partners, traditional and otherwise, to work on concrete projects that will support or result in reductions in emissions.