

BEACON

SPOTLIGHT
AWARD

WINNER

BEST PRACTICE
ACTIVITIES



County of Ventura

Sustainability Best Practice Activities



INSTITUTE FOR
LOCAL GOVERNMENTSM







Promoting Good Government at the Local Level

County of Ventura

California communities are leading the fight against climate change. From small projects to large-scale programs, cities and counties are making great strides to create healthy, sustainable and economically prosperous communities. Participants in ILG's Beacon Program serve as leaders in this effort, making measureable contributions to reducing energy and greenhouse gas emissions, and sharing their sustainability best practices.

This document represents a collection of activities your agency has completed in 10 areas of sustainability. While local governments have a wide range of choices available to address climate change, these activities represent the unique opportunities and values in your community. These voluntary actions are essential to achieving California's goals to save energy, reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and create more sustainable communities.

SPOTLIGHT AWARD

Areas of Accomplishment		SILVER LEVEL	GOLD LEVEL	PLATINUM LEVEL
	Agency GHG Reductions		2017 (12%)	
	Community GHG Reductions			
	Agency Energy Savings		2016 (11%)	
	Natural Gas Savings		2019 (14%)	
	Sustainability Best Practice Activities		2016	2017
	Beacon Award			

Cities and counties throughout the Golden State should be proud of the accomplishments made through the hard work, innovation and collective community action. The Institute for Local Government applauds your achievements and thanks you for your continued participation in the Beacon Program.

The Beacon Program is sponsored by the Institute for Local Government and the Statewide Energy Efficiency Collaborative (SEEC). SEEC is an alliance between three statewide non-profit organizations and California's four Investor-Owned Utilities. The Beacon Program is funded by California utility ratepayers and administered by Pacific Gas and Electric Company, San Diego Gas and Electric Company, Southern California Edison and Southern California Gas Company under the auspices of the California Public Utilities Commission.



Energy Efficiency and Conservation Activities

Silver

1. The county participates in the in Southern California Edison's Energy Leader Partnership and was the first in SCE's Southern California service area to receive the gold level tier for retrofitting buildings to save energy, planning and implementing plans for energy efficiency, employee training and working with cities to achieve savings. The county has earned more than \$280,000 in rebates from SCE.

Gold

2. Since 2014, the county has offered emPower Central Coast and CaliforniaFIRST as energy financing programs for residential property owners.
3. In 2010, the county completed an Integrated Demand Side Management audit of all eligible facilities that use more than than 200kW. The audit identified opportunities for energy savings and led to building retrofit projects.

Platinum

4. The county uses utility management software to monitor energy use in agency buildings to identify energy usage patterns, abnormalities and provide maintenance indicators. GSA also uses employs external databases, such as the US EPA ENERGY STAR Portfolio program to compare, benchmark and prioritize energy conservation needs.
5. The county has prepared and implemented an Energy Action Plan for agency facilities.
6. The county's Hall of Administration upgraded to an all variable speed central plant control system. GSA installed a "Hartman Loop" control system for the Hall of Administration central chiller plant. The "Hartman Loop" is a proprietary computer-controlled operating system that integrates and optimizes the performance of the chillers, the chilled and condenser water pumps and the cooling tower providing the chilled water used to cool the Hall of Administration. Installation of this system has resulted in a decrease of building operational electrical energy by 197,000 kWh and a decrease of 141 tons of greenhouse gas annually.





Water & Wastewater Systems Activities

Silver

1. The county participates in the emPower Central Coast program. EmPower Central Coast offers free faucet aerators and water-efficient shower heads to residents during Energy Coach site visits as well as community events. The faucet aerators and low-flow shower heads are provided by Southern California Gas Company.

Gold

2. The county has upgraded and retrofitted agency plumbing systems and appliances with water efficient technology and fixtures. These include waterless urinals and the Hall of Administration (saving 20,000-40,000 gallons of water per year for each urinal) and low flow water fixtures, replacing water closets that were rated at 3.5 gallons per flush. The recustin in water amounted to 30 HCF (approximately 3,000 cubic feet or 22,440 gallons per month).
3. The county promotes local solutions for stormwater management, such as rain gardens, green roofs and detention ponds.

Platinum

4. Irrigation is controlled at government center campus and most of our other larger facilities using a computerized watering system that regulates the water based on evapotranspiration.
5. The county has curtailed their watering of lawn areas at the County Government Center by significantly reducing the frequency. At these minimum levels, the county allows the grass to go dormant but not die. The reduction in watering has netted a savings of millions of gallons of water over the a similar period for the previous year.
6. In 2011, the county installed a demonstration garden at the south entrance to the Pretrail Detention Facility. The garden contains recycled rubber mulch as well as weed free plastic and synthetic sod. The purpose of the demonstration garden is to show the community alternative products that can save water and significantly reduce the amount of labor needed to maintain landscapes. The county also holds ocean friendly garden workshops at the Government Center for the general public to learn to design and implement ocean friendly gardens.





Green Building Activities

Silver

1. The county has participated in the emPower Central Coast Program since 2014. The emPower Program includes an energy coach service where coaches spend up to two hours with a homeowner at their residence providing them with information on green building techniques and recommendations to improve their home's energy efficiency. The emPower program also works with contractors to provide them with training on green building techniques.

Gold

2. The emPower Central Coast program has teamed up with the statewide Energy Upgrade California program to provide homeowners with increased utility rebates for implementing energy efficient upgrades.
3. The county is a participating member of the Ventura County Regional Energy Alliance (VCREA). VCREA offers utility sponsored quarterly green building standards trainings to staff from member agencies. These trainings include but are not limited to updates to Title 24, benchmarking and HVAC trainings.

Platinum

4. The county uses compost and mulch in agency landscaping as a water conservation measure.
5. The county has trained appropriate agency staff (such as planners, inspectors, and plan checkers) specifically in green building standards and technologies to facilitate regional environmental considerations in the permitting approval and inspection processes.
6. The county offers online permitting for building projects and encourages energy efficiency standards and green building codes, as well as access to the Build It Smart program encouraging energy- and resource-efficient building practices and land use decisions for Ventura County.





Waste Reduction and Recycling Activities

Silver

1. The county provides information on used motor oil and filter recycling, as well as information for airports, the agricultural community, and the boating population to recycle their used oil and filters.

Gold

2. The county holds household hazardous waste, electronic waste, universal waste, and paper shredding collection events. These events are held throughout the year to provide a location for residents to take their hazardous, electronic and universal waste.
3. The county's website provides information to residents about how to stop receiving unwanted junk mail.

Platinum

4. The county includes information about recycling opportunities on the agency's website.
5. The county provides bins for collection of used batteries and compact florescent lights for proper disposal or recycling.
6. County offers a Business Recycling Assistance program, which is a free consultation service provided by the Ventura County Integrated Waste Management Division to businesses. Solid waste professionals will analyze material inflow and waste outflow to determine whether business is over-subscribed to solid waste collection services, what recycling program(s) would be most effective, and what potential the business has for reducing its generation of waste (source reduction). This service is available for all types of businesses, including agriculture, construction, manufacturing, offices, restaurants, retail stores and others.





Climate-friendly Purchasing Activities

Silver

1. The county looks at quality and price as well as environmental impacts caused by the products they purchase. The county looks at recycled content, landfill and water impacts, and chemical content when considering purchases. The county has a goal to be as green as possible.

Gold

2. The county considers life cycle pricing to ensure that the maintenance, operating, insurance, disposal, and replacement cost of producers or services are considered when evaluating purchase options.
3. The county considers efficient transportation methods when purchasing goods and services, such as using local vendors and or locally produced goods to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Platinum

4. The county has a surplus policy that explains when assets can be surplus and how they are disposed. Options are recycling or disposal in an environmentally responsible manner; trade-in, transfer within same agency or within county agencies; sale to other governmental entities, sale to county employees, or donations.
5. Integrated Pest Management Plan was adopted by the county to reduce and eliminate to the greatest extent possible, the use of pesticide products that pose known, likely, or probable human health or environmental risks. Promote the use of non-hazardous and/or reduced risk alternatives that are protective of human health and the environment. Apply pesticides in a manner that protects and enhances our region's natural resources and public health. At the Ronald Regan Presidential Library and Museum in Simi Valley, toxic chemical free weed-abatement is employed in the form of a 400-goat herd to manage vegetation and protect the area's sensitive riparian habitat from pesticide product impacts.
6. The county publishes a Special Services, Housekeeping and Grounds booklet every year for Earth Day to distribute to county employees and the public to raise awareness on purchasing and using green products and services.





Renewable Energy and Low-Carbon Fuels Activities

Silver

1. The county has installed bicycle racks, showers, bike lockers, and other amenities at agency facilities to promote bicycle use by agency employees and visitors.

Gold

2. The county has consolidated offices that community members often visit at the same time (such as building permitting and environmental health permitting) to reduce vehicle miles traveled.
3. In 2016, the county installed over 3600 solar panels in a parking lot at the Ventura Government Center. The panels are expected to supply over 10 percent of the electricity needed for the massive complex that includes an onsite jail. The project is part of a countywide effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The solar panels, which are expected to last 20 or 30 years, are on canopies that will provide another benefit: shade for the parked cars. The solar array will reduce the county's greenhouse gas emissions by about 532 metric tons per year, equivalent to 80,000 gallons of gasoline used by consumers.

Platinum

4. The county has established and implemented a policy to convert agency fleets, including agency owned, leased or operated vehicles, to hybrid/alternative technology or fuel efficient vehicles. Latest additions to the fleet include 10 Chevy Volt electric vehicle (EV) hybrids.
5. The county has trained agency fleet mechanics to service alternative and fuel efficient vehicles.
6. Solar panels have also been installed at the Moorpark Wastewater Treatment Plant, the Todd Road Jail and the Juvenile Justice Center in El Rio. Any new county fire stations will also include solar panels.





Efficient Transportation Activities

Silver

1. The county offers employees the ability to pay for public transportation for commuting purposes with pre-tax dollars. The county's Transportation Benefit Reimbursement Account program is offered to all regular and part-time county employees. They can set up payroll deductions to reimburse their qualified public transit commuting expenses (i.e., train, bus, etc.) with pre-tax earnings. Save 30 percent or more in transit costs by taking advantage of federal and state tax breaks.

Gold

2. The county has installed nine public electric vehicle charging stations.
3. The county increased online permitting services to reduce the need to travel to agency offices for minor permits and expedite services by implementing Citizen Access, a web-based, real-time one-stop permitting program, allowing the public to search and review permitting information, upload and downloading of documents, processing status look up, and online credit card permit fee payment.

Platinum

4. The county collaborates with the Ventura County Transportation Commission to share transportation-related information, coordinate planning goals and processes, and to take advantage of opportunities to combine and leverage resources.
5. Through the Countywide Guaranteed Ride Home program, if a county employee ever misses their bus or carpool because of working late, etc., their taxi fare will be reimbursed (with certain restrictions). This program is part of the county's commuter trip reduction incentive program.
6. The county has implemented a flexible work schedule for agency employees, incorporating telecommuting and modified work schedules.





Land Use and Community Design Activities

Silver

1. The county participated in SCAG's development of the Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS), in compliance with SB 375. The addition of the sustainable communities strategy to the RTP means that the RTP now integrates not only transportation and land-use planning, but also housing and environmental planning with the goal of reducing regional greenhouse gas emissions. The county uses the RTP/SCS when conducting its own transportation, land use, and environmental planning to assist in efforts to reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions.

Gold

2. Section 3.3 of the Land Use Appendix, in concert with Section 3.3 of the Goals, Policies, and Programs of the General Plan, represents what is commonly known as the "Housing Element." Section 3.3 includes an evaluation of the previous Housing Element adopted in 2011, and details the regional housing needs allocated to the county from January 1, 2014 to October 1, 2021 by SCAG. Based on an assessment of current and future housing needs for all economic segments of the community, including lower income households and special needs populations, a residential vacant land inventory was prepared and constraints on housing production were evaluated. This section summarizes the conclusions reached, provides the assumptions and research behind these conclusions and identifies new and existing programs intended to meet local housing needs. As part of the general plan housing element update in 2013, the county identified potential infill development sites, and maintains a community-wide database of vacant and underutilized infill sites to monitor the community's growth and change.
3. Since 2014, the county has offered CaliforniaFIRST program as an energy financing program for commercial industrial and multifamily property owners to install energy efficient retrofits, solar photovoltaic, or hot water systems on new or existing residential and commercial buildings.

Platinum

4. As part of the county's General Plan update, planning staff is reviewing zoning codes and development policies to identify changes that could improve implementation of land use and transportation policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.





Land Use and Community Design Activities

Platinum

5. The county's planning division is in the process of updating the General Plan to ensure that information in the General Plan is current and that the General Plan's goals, policies, and land use programs are consistent with the community's vision for the future of unincorporated Ventura County. Throughout the update process, community involvement will be welcomed and encouraged. Workshops and meetings will be held on a regular basis and the public will be invited to comment on the draft General Plan elements and the environmental impact report. The Planning Division held a kick-off meeting in April 2016, for the General Plan Update Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and focus groups. The TAC is comprised of county staff and has been formed to assist the division in providing data, information and feedback during the four-year General Plan update process. The focus group members represent a variety of disciplines and expertise and will provide input as key points throughout the General Plan update process.
6. Policy 1 in Section 4.10 Parks and Recreation states that "the county shall maintain and enforce the local parkland dedication requirements (Quimby Ordinance), to acquire and develop neighborhood and community recreation facilities. Parkland dedication shall be based on a standard of five acres of local parkland per thousand population, including neighborhood and community parks".





Open Space and Offsetting Carbon Emission Activities

Silver

1. The county adopted the 20-year urban growth boundary initiatives, Save Open-space and Agriculture Resources (SOAR) Ordinance, as a comprehensive set of voter-approved measures protecting open space and agricultural land against urban sprawl.

Gold

2. County General Plan focus area #3 is specifically aimed at ensuring responsible agencies develop and implement shared programs for the preservation of existing communities' natural environment, agricultural and open space lands.
3. The county's general service agency maintains a tree inventory of its main campus to track offsetting of carbon emissions.

Platinum

4. The county has installed numerous California native and drought semi-tolerant trees at the county Government Center and at the Saticoy Yard.
5. The county hosts workshops during lunchtime hours that showcase community supported agriculture (CSA) and offers discounted CSA boxes to county employees.
6. In 2006, the county adopted an Integrated Pest Management Plan to reduce and eliminate to the greatest extent possible, the use of pesticide products that pose known, likely, or probable human health or environmental risks. The plan promotes the use of non-hazardous and/or reduced risk alternatives that are protective of human health and the environment. Pesticides are applied in a manner that protects and enhances our region's natural resources and public health. At the Ronald Regan Presidential Library and Museum in Simi Valley, the Fire Department employs toxic and chemical free weed-abatement in the form of a 400-goat herd to manage vegetation and protect the area's sensitive riparian habitat from pesticide product impacts. The plan was updated in 2016.





Promoting Community and Individual Action Activities

Silver

1. The county participates in both the Ventura County Regional Energy Alliance (VCREA) and emPower Central Coast Programs, which provide LED lightbulbs, reusable bags, and other give-away items at community events in Ventura County to encourage environmental responsibility.

Gold

2. The county teamed up with the VCREA to cohost local household hazardous waste and e-waste events in October and December 2015 to provide residents with free energy saving LED light strands during the holiday season. The goal of the holiday light exchange was to educate county residents on the benefits of switching to LED holiday lights, which help the environment as well as lower energy use during the high demand holiday season. County residents had the opportunity to recycle several strands of their old incandescent holiday lights – whether or not they still work – in exchange for two free strands of LED holiday lights. The 2015 events yielded 995 recovered incandescent holiday light strands, distributed 560 LED strands and saved 38,636 watts.
3. The county developed the “Working and Living Sustainably” website to inform the community how to conserve water, save energy, reduce waste, purchase green products, eat sustainably, and reduce single car trips.

Platinum

4. The county collaborates with other local government agencies to share information about climate change and best practices to reduce greenhouse gases. For example, the county participates on an advisory working group for implementing a community choice aggregation program in Ventura County.
5. Every April and October, county staff updates the public on the county’s implementation of agency sustainability practices, such as e-waste collections, plant a tree events, and bike to work day.
6. The county hosts numerous events throughout the year that highlight and promote sustainability programs, such as e-waste collections, Coastal clean-up days, tree planting events, Earth Day events, and bike to work day.





© 2019 by Institute for Local Government
1400 K Street, Suite 205
Sacramento, CA 95814
916-658-8208
www.ca-ilg.org

