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News from the **ALASKA CENTER FOR APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY**
Box 872020, Wasilla, AK 99687

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Our mission is to promote research and education for Alaskans in sustainable economic development

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ANNUAL MEETING

Over forty people gathered Saturday October 11 at the Agate Inn conference room near Wasilla for our annual member meeting. We enjoyed potluck dinner and a broad and somewhat eclectic range of presentations, including:

- The new solid oxide fuel cell at the National Park Service's Exit Glacier visitor center near Seward (Tim Hudson);
- "Why I switched from Miracle-Gro to Compost tea for gardening" (Jeff Lowenfels);
- Sustainable living on 1 KW per day at remote RockHouse Lodge (Dr. Phil St. John);
- Sustainable development and the UAA College of Business and Public Policy (Dr. Patty DeMarco);
- Local Economy, Sustainable Economy (Russell deForest);
- Economical, Social and Environmental benefits of a Vegan lifestyle (Delisa and Charlie Renideo).

The idea was to demonstrate the common thread - developing sustainable systems - running through these very different aspects of life in Alaska. Our presenters, several of whom are members of ACAT, covered both the technological and consciousness changes involved in moving to sustainable economies. If it seems like a full evening, it was! The speakers were engaging and inspiring, and we had great discussions after each presentation. If it's any measure of success; we had many people lingering long into the night. I was very pleased to see local state Senator Scott Ogan join us. Hopefully, some of the concepts and benefits of ecologically sustainable economic development made an impression!

Several members who could not make the meeting suggested we film the event, and Charlie Renideo was kind enough to volunteer his audio/video services. So, if everything works out, we hope to have a few VHS tapes or CDs of the speakers that we can send around on loan. Thanks to those of you who suggested this, and thanks to Charlie for doing it! Maybe someday we'll be live video-casting - who knows?? Please get hold of me if you'd like information on how to contact any of our speakers.

I'd also like to thank Sandy and Harvey Bowers for graciously providing both their conference room and lodging for several of the speakers. Finally, thanks to Judy Masteller for skillfully and patiently running the registration desk.

BUSINESS MEETING

A. Exec. Director Overview of recent/near-future activities (Mark Masteller):

With the popularity of the word "sustainable," I have become increasingly focused on the need to define "sustainable" and educate people about what ecologically sustainable economic development is, what it can look like, and why it's necessary to transition to sustainable economic systems. In all aspects of life, people who know the basic concepts of what it means to be "sustainable" can apply those concepts to any area of their life. But first, they must be convinced that "sustainability" is necessary and attainable. It's easy to find stories of gloom and doom, but more important are stories that instill a sense of hope about our future.

Along these lines, I have offered educational presentations regarding the basic of sustainable systems for any who will hear me, from a class for Alaska Pacific University to radio shows to Chamber of Commerce meetings. I have also written several Op-ed pieces for various newspapers. ACAT will soon be purchasing a laptop computer to develop polished presentations that can be tailored to the interests of various group. Our web site can also be used more effectively to educate folks about ACAT and the concepts behind sustainable development. I am always looking for help to upgrade the site. Holler if you'd like to help!

Partly as a result of increased media, I have been approached about several potential projects. These contacts include a representative of the American Hydrogen Association (regarding their interest in a demonstration project using wind power to produce hydrogen), and a North Slope contractor (regarding re-use of building materials and wood beams recycled from oil field projects).

An equally important focus is to broaden and diversify ACAT's revenue stream, to allow me to spend more time working on ACAT projects. Again, education is important. I'd like to do this by developing workshops/seminars - primarily for business groups and agencies - about the benefits/needs relating to development of sustainable systems.

ACAT currently has about 70 members; enough to support many basic office expenses but not enough to provide much salary. Grants can provide short-term support, but grants are not a reliable source of funding. Developing a salable product - educational and consulting services relating to sustainable development in Alaska - provides the surest way to build a steady revenue stream.

B. Finances

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| Assets | | |
| Total | | 13,180.58 |
| Obligations (now through June 2004) | | |
| ACF Wind-Diesel Environmental Impacts Project | 5,000.00 | |
| Laptop Computer for presentations | 1,500.00 | |
| ED Salary (\$200/month, non-project) | 1,800.00 | |
| Office expenses (approx.) | 600.00 | |
| Total | | -8,900.00 |
| Remainder | | 4,280.58 |

C. Board President comments – Harvey Bowers:

Harvey stressed that the strength of any organization like ours lies in members willingly offering to serve on the Board of Directors. Every organization needs new "blood" and new ideas, and it's easy for people to burn out if they serve too long on a board.

D. Board Nominations (see below)

E. Member Input - Board Direction, etc.

First dollar, second dollar, etc.

List some ideas

Begin conversation, continue electronically

BOARD CHANGES, NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Art Eash has graciously served the past 3 years as board secretary, and has done a fine job taking minutes and encouraging others to join ACAT. He has directly sponsored some new members, and supported training for myself as executive director. I really appreciate Art's encouragement and willingness to serve, and hope all will join me in thanking him for his outstanding board service!

Nominations for Board of Directors

We currently have four board members, and three vacant positions, on our board. Terms for Art Eash and Roger Rowell are up; leaving five positions to be filled in this election. Roger is seeking re-election, and we have two new candidates willing to step up to the plate. When all is said and done we will still have two vacant seats, so if for some reason any member decides they want to be more involved, there's still room! Please take a moment to thank the following folks for their willingness to serve - and here's a brief summary:

1) Mollie Boyer - Mollie lives in Palmer and is the Director of Valley Community for Recycling Solutions, and has worked tremendously hard to establish, in a few short years, a regular recycling program in the Mat-Su Valley. VCRS is in the process of building a recycling center near the central landfill, and is collecting materials on a weekly basis at an interim site. Recycling materials is a key component to developing sustainable local economies, but there are tremendous challenges surrounding recycling in small markets like Alaska.

2) Henry Cole - Henry is currently an adjunct professor in Forestry at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, connected with the Regional Resilience and Adaptation Program and Training, a graduate program dealing with sustainability. He's taught many courses at UAF in math, science, physics, policy and system dynamics. Henry was not present at our meeting, and submitted the following statement:

"It seems to me that alternative technologies and projects that are labeled as "green" can be most effective only if they are structured collaboratively between the private sector, industry and the community. Much of the current ineffectiveness of green projects and environmental efforts lies with the development of projects which are intended to solve only one piece of the overall problem but do not take the needs of the private sector or other groups into account. I feel that the efforts of ACAT, and the very knowledgeable individuals connected with it, both in a formal and informal manner, form a politically astute network in Alaska to identify and promote projects that can contribute to wise and long term development in the state. This is a group with which I would like to work."

3) Roger Rowell - Roger is a current ACAT board member, a Research Chemist and Project Leader at the USDA Forest Products Lab, and also a Professor in Ecology and Forest Management at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. He has held these positions for over 35 years. His interests include research into composites made from sustainable agro-resources and fiber/plastic combinations. Roger originally got involved with ACAT as one of our conference speakers and collaborator on the fiberboard research project.

4) Others?? Mark noted that no other nominations have been received from the membership via electronic means, and that the election would take place by email/mail.

***** ELECTION - BOARD OF DIRECTORS *****

You can vote by replying to this email or by mailing your ballot to ACAT (address above). If you have a family membership, each member (maximum of 2) may vote. Please vote by November 10.

You may vote for up to 3 people:

Mollie Boyer ___
Henry Cole ___
Roger Rowell ___

THANK YOU FOR VOTING!

UPCOMING PROJECTS

Wind-Diesel Project:

ACAT received a \$5,000 grant from the Alaska Conservation Foundation to develop appropriate criteria and methods to compare environmental impacts associated with wind and diesel electric generating systems in rural Alaska. Environmental impacts cannot always be measured in dollar terms, but comparative measures (e.g. tons of carbon or hazardous waste produced) can be developed that will help community leaders assess long-term strategies. A relatively new technique called "life cycle assessment" may be helpful in this project, and it will be helpful for me to learn more about life cycle assessment. This project will run from October 2003 through March 2004.

Guest Speaker Presentations:

I'm looking into speakers on a variety of subjects, including Ecological Economics, the Genuine Progress indicator vs. the Gross Domestic Product, Alaskan furniture design and manufacture, the Cold Climate Housing and Research Center in Fairbanks, developing local economies, community-supported agriculture, etc.

ACAT Presentations:

I've been invited to talk about sustainable development at the annual meeting of the Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference, sometime in January. I'll also continue to offer presentations to business, school and other community groups. Our profile has also been raised through print media, and I encourage members to toss in "your 2 cents."

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