

Agreement kicks off conference on energy

*By Kevin Huelsmann, Jackson Hole, Wyo.
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Jackson, Teton County and Lower Valley Energy officials today are scheduled to sign what they are billing as a historic agreement in which they will pledge to work toward reducing carbon emissions and energy consumption.

A detailed plan outlining how officials plan to implement energy efficiency measures will also be unveiled during an event that starts at 3 p.m. today at Snow King Resort. The plan was first released earlier this summer, but until a few weeks ago, town and county staff had been collecting public comments to incorporate.

Town Public Works Director Larry Pardee is also scheduled to give a presentation about a report that details carbon emissions and energy consumption in Jackson Hole.

Mayor Mark Barron said the fact that the three entities have all agreed to help forward energy efficiency is remarkable.

"I doubt this has been done before," Barron said. "There are three entities, all of which are significant users or, in the case of Lower Valley, the main energy provider, in the area. To have that kind of support behind this effort is huge. It's a historic event."

Tonight's meeting will serve as a segue into the two-day Energy Sustainability Summit, which will bring local, regional and national energy experts to discuss energy sustainability.

The summit is set to kick off with opening remarks by Barron at 8:15 a.m. Friday at Snow King Resort. Several panels are scheduled throughout the rest of Friday, and former World Bank President James Wolfensohn's speech at 6 p.m. will close the day.

Saturday events are scheduled to start at 8:45 a.m. There will be panel discussions until noon, after which the conference will shift to the Center for the Arts.

At 1:30 p.m., the film "Crude" will screen at the center, followed by a talk by John Tozzi, the founder of an energy investment company, and John Willot, a former ExxonMobil executive.

At 7 p.m. Saturday, former CIA director James Woolsey will give a speech at the closing event of the summit.

Barron said the summit is a "communication tool" that will help local and regional officials exchange ideas they can use to address energy consumption in their respective organizations and areas.

Anyone interested in attending the summit can register at www.jhesp.com, which also has a full schedule of events.

All events at the Center for the Arts are free. There is a \$35 registration fee to attend all of the panel discussions Friday and Saturday at Snow King Resort.