



Published on SavannahNow.com (<http://savannahnow.com>)

Savannah warms up to climate change

By Mary Landers

Created 2008-04-10 23:30

Savannah Alderman Larry Stuber doesn't need much convincing that climate change is real. He's already seen evidence of the resulting sea level rise in area sewers.

"I've seen drainage pipes that are 100 to 150 years old that have water in them at low tide," said Stuber, the former CEO of Savannah-based EMC Engineering Services. "You know they didn't build them like that. Fifty years from now, if it rises another 2 feet, half the drainage will be under water."

Concerns such as that have Stuber taking part in **Climate Communities**, a national advocacy organization that seeks greater federal support for local government efforts to combat climate change.

Stuber represented Savannah this week at the **Climate Communities** summit in Washington, D.C. About 40 other cities and counties around the country - many from the more environmentally progressive West Coast - sent representatives.

They have two main objectives, Stuber said:

Push passage of the Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act, which mandates economy-wide reductions in greenhouse-gas emissions by as much as 66 percent below 2005 levels over the next four decades.

Ensure that Congress provides full funding of \$2 billion for local government grant programs authorized by the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007.

Savannah would receive \$750,000, Stuber said.

Stuber's trip is part of a wider effort by Savannah to cut its carbon dioxide footprint, the impact its

activities have on climate change in terms of the amount of greenhouse gases produced.

Savannah joined Cities for Climate Protection last year and, with its membership, was given software to help determine its carbon dioxide footprint.

Most of the city's use of electricity comes from pushing water - drinking water, sewage and storm water - from place to place.

"Most cities have the benefit of gravity in moving water," said Sean Brandon, Savannah's director of mobility and parking. "We have to pump 24 hours a day."

Other big users are the city's five parking garages, which have lighting and wiring issues, Brandon said.

City staffers will make recommendations to council soon on the target reduction in carbon footprint and how to achieve that, Brandon said.

Tybee is further along on a similar project. Its mayor, Jason Buelterman, signed the U.S. Conference of Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement in 2006. Like **Climate Communities** and Cities for Climate Protection, its aim is to take action on climate change on a local level.

Tybee has begun measuring its carbon footprint and plans to reduce that impact by 7 percent over 1990 levels by 2012, said council member Paul Wolff.

An energy audit shows the city can save money and energy with easy fixes such as switching to compact fluorescent light bulbs and motion sensors to control lights.

"A lot of it is just common sense," Wolff said. "We as the city have to set the example to save all of us some pollution."

Source URL:

<http://savannahnow.com/node/478580>