



THE TAOS NEWS

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Town, county sign energy resolution

By Elizabeth Cleary

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Bob Bresnahan, a member of Renewable Taos, says that with the abundant sunshine in Taos County, he can't see why the area doesn't rely solely on solar energy.

"Every time I drive through Taos and I don't see panels on everyone's roof, it makes we wince," Bresnahan told *The Taos News*.

At its meeting last Tuesday (Oct. 15) the Taos County Commission unanimously approved a resolution put forward by Renewable Taos, a group that meets weekly. The document resolves that the county, municipal and pueblo governments within Taos County should create a committee tasked with planning a renewable energy transition, develop local and regional energy transition plans, and remove the obstacles that stand in the way of local generation of renewable energy.

The town adopted the resolution Tuesday night (Oct. 22.) Renewable Taos formed two years ago, when Bresnahan and John Gusdorf calculated how much it would cost Taos County to transition completely to solar power. They discovered it would be in the neighborhood of \$100 million, which seemed to them like a big number. However, when compared to the \$60 million Taos County spends every year on non-renewable energy, most of which leaves the Taos County economy, they reasoned pursuing renewable energy was the environmentally and economically sound option.

At the commission meeting, Mary Emery, a member of Renewable Taos, said a solar array the distance between Albuquerque and Santa Fe could power the entire U.S.

"Sixty million dollars leaves the Taos County economy annually in fossil fuel energy costs," Emery told commissioners. "That is a huge amount of money that could stay and circulate in our economy. New Mexico has abundant sunshine, everyone knows that."

But the organization says it faces a giant roadblock in its quest to make Taos County solar-powered. Tri-State Generation and Transmission, the supplier for Kit Carson Electrical Co-Op, limits the amount of power electrical coops can generate to 5 percent. However, Kit Carson is recognized nationally as a leader among electrical co-ops for its efforts in renewable energy usage.

Bill Brown, a member of Renewable Taos and representative from Sage Environmental Consulting, a Texas-based group that helps companies with EPA compliance, said resolutions are significant because they indicate community support for an idea, and this signed resolution could help Renewable Taos secure federal grant funding.

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