

Sustainable Communities Conference and Trade Show 2008 Moving Innovation Into Practice

FEBRUARY 14-16, 2008, OTTAWA, CANADA

Moving from “What” to “How”

The theme of the Sustainable Communities Conference and Trade Show 2008 is moving innovation into practice—going from “what to do” to “how to do it.” Building on the previous conference’s theme, “Connecting the Dots,” delegates will take the next step: turning ideas into real action.

Over the past decade, FCM has seen a “huge groundswell” in people’s understanding of sustainability issues, and a strong desire at the municipal level to act

on them, says Andrew Cowan, Senior Manager of the Knowledge Management Unit at the FCM Centre for Sustainable Community Development. “People no longer ask what sustainability is, they ask what to do about it,” Cowan says. About climate change, people “don’t ask whether it’s real, but how we deal with it.”

The sessions offered at the Conference are designed to build on this desire for action. The “how-to” workshops will provide delegates with practical training

and solutions. Sessions on planning will be extremely useful for municipalities and provincial associations looking for processes, tools and options for their own sustainable development plans.

Cowan says he’ll consider the conference a success if delegates leave feeling able to move forward with their local agendas. He hopes communities will also keep the conversation going after the conference, and look to FCM and its Green Municipal Fund for both “funding and knowledge.”

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Partners for Climate Protection Forum

The Partners for Climate Protection Forum on Wednesday afternoon gave participants a chance to “put a face to a name, and a story to a name,” said Devin Causley, coordinator of the PCP program. Speaking in advance of the forum, Causley said the forum aimed to introduce delegates to their fellow conference participants, while providing an unprecedented opportunity to hear stories from across the country.

André Lambert, Acting Director of the FCM Centre for Sustainable Community Development, Berry Vrbancic, FCM Vice-President at Large, and Megan Jamieson, Director ICLEI Canada, were also on hand to speak to delegates.

The Forum centred on “discussion, and profiling the activities of municipalities,” said Causley. Communities shared their stories, which spanned a wide range from journey stories to concrete impacts that are only now becoming visible. They also shared strategies on common challenges, such as sustaining efforts on issues despite staff changes.



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Moving Innovation Into Practice



FCM CEO Brock Carlton: Message of the Day



“This is going to be a great conference. We have excellent speakers and content, and I expect everyone will benefit, both through their presentations and workshops, and through the general networking opportunities. A lot has happened since our last Sustainable Communities Conference in 2006. There has been a real growth in both understanding and desire to act on key issues like climate change. More and more communities are moving beyond just sharing information and debating the issues. They are ready to

put their good ideas into practice, and they’re here to learn how to do it. FCM is proud that we can play a role in supporting that work, through the conference, our Green Municipal Fund, our FCM-CH2M HILL Sustainable Community Awards program, and our Sustainable Communities Mission to regions in Canada that are implementing innovative projects. I look forward meeting and speaking with you at the conference.”

Your municipal government and the carbon market

Carbon credits: What are they? Why do I need them? Where can I sell them?

“If your municipality is interested in making money by reducing its carbon footprint, then come and see me,” said Doug Salloum, general manager of FCM’s new Green Municipal Corporation. Salloum will be on hand Thursday, February 14th, from 3–5 p.m. in the Burgundy Room to help conference participants navigate the barriers, challenges, and opportunities in trading carbon-offset credits on the market.

Salloum said his objective is to “clarify and demystify the carbon market” for politicians, senior administrators, and anyone else interested in learning more about

this effective instrument of environmental stewardship. Participants will come away with a clear understanding of the offset credit market and a new perspective on its advantages for municipalities.

The Green Municipal Corporation was created by FCM to help municipal governments access a federally regulated offset credit market. Municipal governments are committed to reducing greenhouse-gas emissions from their operations, and upcoming federal air-emission regulations are expected to allow municipal governments to sell their emission reductions as carbon-offset credits. The corporation will work with provincial and territorial municipal associations to help municipal governments overcome regulatory, technical, and financial barriers to entering the market, and minimize the risks.

Partners for Climate Protection Forum



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Causley predicted that discussion would highlight communities’ impressive accomplishments, from “modest education strategies, to fixed projects and emissions reduced.” Municipalities are “leading the process,” he said.

Moving from “What” to “How”

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Cowan encourages municipalities attending the Conference to apply to attend the FCM Sustainable Communities Mission, which sends municipal representatives from across Canada to see real examples of successful projects. Often these delegates later apply to FCM’s Green Municipal Fund to replicate those leading examples.

Both the conference and the mission are catalysts to real change. They show delegates practical solutions to help them meet their sustainability goals.

Says Cowan, “the Conference is really where everything starts!”

