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Column

Sustainable practices a City priority

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In the city*

As an organization, the city of Fort Collins has made great strides toward becoming more sustainable, and we're constantly looking for ways to improve.

The city's sustainability practices focus on good environmental stewardship as well as fiscal and social responsibility.

At a practical level, these efforts will help reduce our impacts to the environment, and in many cases, they reduce our costs by increasing efficiency. For example, recent energy initiatives including lighting retrofits and building temperature controls have saved the city more than \$50,000.

At the same time we are retrofitting old buildings, we are also requiring that new buildings meet more aggressive standards. In 2006, City Council adopted a resolution stating all future city-owned buildings be constructed to meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, Gold standards.

LEED is the U.S. Green Building Council's certification program and a nationally accepted benchmark for green building. As a result, last year, the Northside Aztlan Community Center became the first full-service community center in the entire nation to earn LEED Gold designation.

Weaving sustainable practices into all areas of our operations is a priority for city leadership.

For example, the city has partnered with the National Center for Craftsmanship to deconstruct three structures in the Reservoir Ridge Natural Area.

Instead of razing the buildings and trashing the materials, the deconstruction process will hand-dismantle the structures and remove materials for reuse and recycling. This reduces waste in landfills, and the National Center for Craftsmanship will use this project as a training opportunity.

To further our successes, we recently launched a new organizational effort to precisely define and report on the city's top internal environmental objectives.

The intent is to clearly communicate and track high-priority initiatives such as reducing our solid waste stream and conserving energy. With a renewed sense of commitment and a dedication to accountability, the city of Fort Collins can become a world-class leader in this area.

Beyond the measurable savings to the city organization and taxpayers, there are multiple benefits to the city pursuing a more sustainable environmental path.

It appears that future economic development will rely heavily on green technologies. To the extent that we can demonstrate environmental leadership, we will solidify our reputation with other

governments, industry, venture capital and intellectual capital. To a large degree, our efforts are, and should be, designed to enhance our performance and reputation, thereby increasing our economic competitiveness.

I am convinced that in the long run these sustainability efforts will benefit our local economy, save the city money and improve our environmental conditions.