

[City receives national award for Community Energy Challenge](#)

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The City of Bellingham recently received national recognition for its role as lead partner in the Whatcom County Community Energy Challenge, a community effort to reduce green house gas emissions by reducing the amount of energy used in the region.

The city was honored with an ICLEI USA Local Sustainability Leadership Award, presented on Sept. 25 in Washington, D.C., for its leadership role in the Whatcom County Community Energy Challenge. ICLEI, which was founded in 1990 as the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, is an international association of local governments and national and regional local government organizations that have made a commitment to sustainable development.

Bellingham City Council member Jack Weiss accepted the award in the other Washington on behalf of the city and presented it at the Oct. 11 Bellingham City Council meeting.

“With more than 100 home energy assessments already completed and assessments fully booked through the end of the year, the Community Energy Challenge is proving to be a success right out of the gate,” Weiss said in a press release.

In two years, the Community Energy Challenge, a joint endeavor of Whatcom County cities, the Opportunity Council, Sustainable Connections, Whatcom County government and others, is expected to reduce energy use in 150 local businesses, perform 1,800 home energy assessments, and improve energy efficiency in 900 of those homes. Actions initiated through the program could prevent the emission of more than 7,000 tons of carbon dioxide per year – that’s the equivalent of eliminating the use of nearly 800,000 gallons of gasoline.

The program is also intended to boost economic activity by an estimated \$10 million by generating construction work. It is expected to save more than \$1 million in energy expenditures and create at least 35 new “green collar” jobs.

“This award recognizes Whatcom County’s commitment to reducing green house gas emissions by reducing the amount of energy we use,” Bellingham Mayor Dan Pike said. “Bellingham is pleased to share this leadership award with Sustainable Connections, the Opportunity Council, Whatcom County, all six cities that also are committed to this effort, and a host of other local organizations.”