

Center for ReSource Conservation Reflections: Reflecting on 2009 & Hopes in 2010

By Center for ReSource Conservation's Executive Director (Keith Frausto) and REAP Assistant (Jeremy Lauffenburger)

Since 1977, the Center for ReSource Conservation (CRC) has provided a range of programs to help local residents improve their quality of life, their homes, and their environment. For example, CRC's Residential Energy Action Program (REAP) has helped homeowners find cost-effective ways to improve the comfort and value of their homes, while reducing energy costs. "We wanted to conserve energy to save the planet and our pocketbook," comments homeowner and local artist Gia Hamilton. Gia's 1972 Boulder home fell below current heating and building standards, making it economical for energy improvements. A loan last spring from Boulder County's ClimateSmart Program was the final motivating factor that convinced her to invest in improvements.

In 2009, CRC's REAP helped 700 other homeowners implement energy efficiency through audits and cost-savings measures. In 2010, CRC hopes to expand the program with the City of Boulder, Boulder County, and other communities to reach even more residents. Additional rounds of ClimateSmart Loans and Solar Grants will continue in 2010 with application cycles in the early spring and fall. Check www.beclimatesmart.org for more information on workshops and how to apply for these loans.

CRC's Energy Division also managed the Insulate Colorado and Solar Thermal Rebate Programs which processed over 100 energy-saving rebates for equipment and services. And "ReNew Our Schools" installed 10kW PV solar systems on three Boulder County schools.

CRC's Waste Division is focused on ReSource, with locations in Boulder and Fort Collins. ReSource promotes waste reduction by salvaging used building materials and reselling them at drastically reduced prices. In this manner, local residents can find great bargains for home improvement projects, at the same time using materials that could have wound up in the dump. Every year, more than 20,000 area residents shop at ReSource. With support from both the City and County of Boulder, CRC recently moved its Boulder ReSource Yard to 6400 Arapahoe Ave. and will be joined next year by Eco-Cycle, creating "Recycle Row" - a one-stop shop for recycling and reusing.

CRC's Water Division helps residents, businesses, and municipalities decrease water use, at the same time improving the beauty of their lawns and gardens. The Slow the Flow Program conducted 1,420 free sprinkler inspections at homes and businesses to reduce outdoor water use. Over 400 Garden-In-A-Box units were purchased by homeowners who converted their lawns to low-water-use xeriscape gardens.

As CRC looks into 2010, we are determined reach, educate, and empower more residents with information that will help them save money, while protecting the environment. Recycle Row should become a place where people shop before they go to the big box hardware stores. Garden-In-A-Box sales should increase to the thousands vs. hundreds. The Center for ReSource Conservation will measure its positive impact over the next year, justifying a return on investment in waste reduction, water conservation, and energy efficiency programs.

Center for ReSource Conservation (CRC) is a non-profit organization that implements programs for the Boulder County community through their Waste (Deconstruction/Re-Use), Energy, and Water Divisions. REAP (Residential Energy Action Program) is a free service that includes personalized energy counseling after homeowners receive a subsidized energy audit. Learn more by visiting www.conservationcenter.org.

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