

Foster's Daily Democrat

The Region's Largest Newspaper

DOVER, N.H., SATURDAY, JANUARY 20, 2007

Residents take aim at global warming

By MICHAEL GOOT
Portsmouth Bureau Chief

PORTSMOUTH — When Sue Jones of Brentwood watched Al Gore's movie "An Inconvenient Truth," she knew that she had to act to stop global warming.

She organized a party at her church for others to watch the film, where Gore uses slides to demonstrate the effects of climate change. Then, she spearheaded an effort to get a resolution on the town ballot in March to protect the



level of the ocean, everything in life. We're losing species to global warming. Right now, the polar bears are drowning. The water level could rise and cover cities in the East. There's so much carbon being put in the air. We never thought that

environment.

"It was explained very well in the film — the effects (global warming) would have on the weather and the

we could change the climate of the world," she said.

Brentwood is not alone. About 115 towns in New Hampshire have agreed to put a resolution drafted by the Carbon Coalition on their ballot at Town Meeting. This includes such communities in Rockingham and Strafford County as Barrington, Northwood, Newington, New Castle and Nottingham. The Carbon Coalition is a nonpartisan organization seeking to prevent substantial climate

GLOBAL, PAGE A9

Global

From Page A1

change and advocate for a national energy policy that reduces emission of carbon dioxide gases, which scientists believe contribute to global warming.

The resolution advocates establishing a national program requiring reductions of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions while protecting the U.S. economy and creating a major national research initiative to foster rapid development of sustainable energy technologies thereby stimulating new jobs and investment.

The goal of the Town Meeting ballot campaign is to attract the attention of the presidential candidates who have already begun making the rounds of the Granite State to get ready for the 2008 election.

"The message is: 'Mr. Candidate: 800,000 people in New Hampshire in 115 towns in New

Hampshire feel this way about global warming. How do you feel?'" said Ted Leach, co-chairman of the coalition.

Leach said the group is modeling its efforts after the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests efforts in 1983 to bring attention to the issue of acid rain.

The coalition had began its efforts during the last presidential primary season but this year is adding the component of lobbying local towns to pass the resolution is new this time.

"We said if we could get 50-75 towns, that would make a pretty good statement," Leach said.

He believes the issue is more on people's minds. New Hampshire basically lies at the "tailpipe" of the nation and gets the dirty air from other areas of the country.

"Global warming has been on Page 1 of every newspaper in the country every since (Hurricane) Katrina. It's moved front and center into the public consciousness now. What we tried



CARBON COALITION members, from left, Diantha Wade, Lois Hatch, Sue Jones and Pricilla Clark.

Aaron Rohde/
Staff photographer

to do in our meetings with various groups around the state is now try to break it done and show that everyone of us has a role to play in this," he said.

"We don't talk about what's going to happen in Bangladesh. We talk about what happens in your back door and what you can do," he said.

While the resolution is not specific, Leach said it puts the issue out on the table so the country can have one-on-one discussions with the candidates about their positions and hold them accountable.

Leach said he used his small town of Hancock as the "pace setter" and they were able to get more than 300 signatures in four hours.

"People were anxious to sign this. There was some resistance from some people who haven't bought into the sciences that is there," he said. "By and large it confirmed my suspicion that the public is way ahead of the elected officials in this issue."

The Carbon Coalition is a

nonpartisan organization. The co-chairman, Joe Keefe, is a former Democratic legislator.

"I think both Joe and myself are very disappointed in the actions of both of our parties. We just like to see a lot more leadership on this issue and we're not afraid to demand that of anybody who wants to become president of the United State, U.S. senator and congressmen," he said.

The influence of former Vice President Al Gore's slide-show presentation movie "An Inconvenient Truth" cannot be underestimated. A clerk at the Dover Blockbuster's said they have 46 copies of the movie in stock and 13 on the shelf as of Wednesday. While they are not flying off the shelves like they did when the DVD was first released, the movie is still very popular.

This Town Meeting grassroots effort is spreading across the state to towns big and small.

Barrington also has the initiative on the ballot. Board of Selectmen Chairman George Bai-

ley said the town is very interested in becoming more environmentally responsible.

"We are interested in saving energy, which in turn saves money for the town," he said.

He has been reading the literature on the issue of emissions. He said the school district worked to build a more energy-efficient middle school and that saved money and energy.

Denise Blaha of Nottingham said she volunteered to work with the Carbon Coalition on this issue because of her job at the University of New Hampshire's Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans and Space. All she had to do is get 25 signatures from registered voters.

"In two hours, I had over 80 signatures," she said. "I had no problem getting a strong show of support from the townspeople. My sense is that residents understand that it's time for action on climate change. We unfortunately haven't had the federal leadership on this issue."

She worries that by the end of

the century, New Hampshire will have a climate resembling North Carolina by the end of the century, which would result in losing vibrant fall foliage, the winter ski season, the comfortably warm summers and much of the coastline.

Blaha suspects that more people believe there is a strong scientific consensus on this issue. She works for the Carbon Coalition's Speakers Bureau and volunteers her time to tell people the steps they can take to reduce emissions.

This includes replacing the incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs, washing in cold water and trying to reduce driving. She said she saved about \$250 in her annual electric bills with these steps.

She is optimistic about the chances the resolution will pass in Nottingham and statewide.

"I really think New Hampshire has a terrific opportunity to lead the nation in climate change. We've done it before. We can do it again," she said.