



Colorado Department  
of Public Health  
and Environment

*“To protect and improve  
the health and environment  
of the people of Colorado.”*

# NEWS

4300 Cherry Creek Drive South, Denver, CO 80246 (303) 692-2000

Contact: Christopher Dann  
Public Information Officer  
Air Pollution Control Division  
303-692-3281

For Immediate Release

Monday, September 13, 2004

## **FRED Project At Rio Blanco Fairgrounds Showcases Resource Efficiency Technologies**

**DENVER** – A project showcasing resource efficiency technologies at the Rio Blanco County Fairgrounds in Meeker debuted recently, both educating area residents about the environmental benefits of the project as well as reducing pollutants and increasing energy efficiency in connection with regular fairgrounds operations.

The Fairgrounds Resource Efficiency Project, known affectionately as FRED, includes a series of upgrades to facilities at the Rio Blanco County Fairgrounds. A sister project also was completed earlier this summer at the Mesa County Fairgrounds in Grand Junction.

“This project is a good educational tool to show the concepts of renewable energy and alternative fuels, which are something of interest here in the county,” said Rio Blanco County Commissioner Kim Cook. “I’d encourage residents and other visitors to go out to the fairgrounds and see the projects for themselves.”

The projects were funded largely through a \$115,000 supplemental environmental project grant from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and are administered by the Colorado-based not-for-profit StEPP Foundation.

“We are pleased to fund such worthwhile efforts as the projects in Rio Blanco and Mesa counties,” said Douglas H. Benevento, executive director of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. “Resource efficient technologies that utilize renewable energy and alternative fuels play an important role in protecting Colorado’s air, land and water now and in the future.”

At the Rio Blanco Fairgrounds, a solar electric system was installed to help offset electrical power usage. A community building and office space at the fairgrounds also received insulation and lighting upgrades to improve energy efficiency and provide better quality light.

Combined, the solar electric system, energy efficiency and lighting upgrades are expected to eliminate nearly 19,000 pounds of carbon dioxide per year.

*---more---*

Plans also call for a blend of biodiesel and petrodiesel fuels to be used at the fairgrounds in the future. B20 biodiesel can reduce carbon dioxide emissions by nearly 80 percent, with additional reductions of carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons and particulate matter.

Portions of the fairgrounds are in use throughout the year, so the benefits extend far beyond the few days each year when the fair is in session.

“The fairgrounds are used regularly for everything from Boy Scouts to bingo,” said Scott Ely of Sunsense, Inc. of Carbondale. Sunsense, a regional distributor of renewable energy products and services, received the grant to complete the FRED project. “The community building at the Rio Blanco Fairgrounds is more of a community center. It’s a high profile building in a high use area.”

Ely continued: “We were able to showcase these technologies for fair goers so someday they may be used in their own homes. With regular visits throughout the year from school groups and organization groups, the advantages of energy-saving technologies that reduce power consumption can be demonstrated year-round.”

Funding for supplemental environmental projects like FRED are made available through the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and other regulators. Portions of negotiated settlements in cases where environmental laws have been violated often are targeted for funding such projects. The intent is to benefit communities harmed by the violations.

Projects that fit the specific settlement criteria are selected from the StEPP Foundation database or through a proposal process, then put through a systematic review. Subcommittees review detailed proposals and make recommendations to the full StEPP Foundation Board of Directors. The board makes recommendations on which projects to fund to the Department of Public Health and Environment, which must decide if the projects meet the negotiated requirements of each related settlement.

Subcommittees consist of at least one StEPP board member and four or five professionals from pertinent and/or related fields. Participants represent business, government, academia and non-profit sectors. Subcommittee members include experts in economic development, renewable energy, community development, energy efficiency, pollution prevention and environmental leadership.

For more information on the StEPP Foundation, environmental projects, or other related matters, please visit the StEPP Foundation's website at <http://www.steppfoundation.org/>.