

The Million Watt Challenge

Energy Conservation in Chico, CA

Bryce Goldstein



Problem/Opportunity

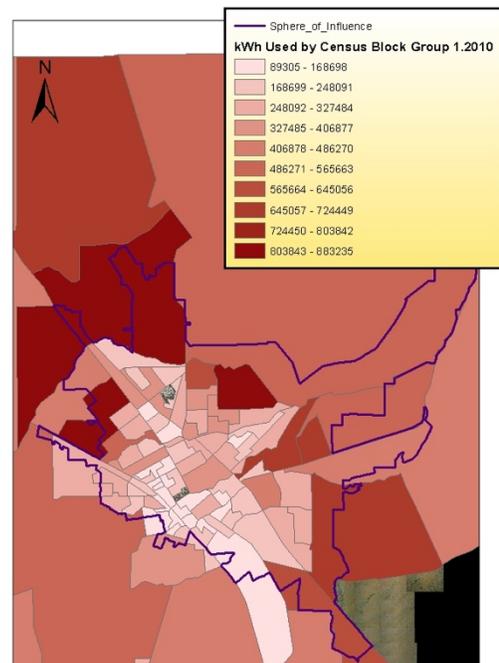
Residential electricity use in Chico has risen 13.8% since 2005. To meet the City's 2020 Climate Action Plan (CAP) goals, household energy use must decrease dramatically. The City of Chico Sustainability Task Force identified a need to more actively engage the community in climate action broadly, and residential energy conservation specifically.

Project

In support of their energy reduction goals, for 2016-17, the City of Chico engaged CivicSpark to plan and implement a widespread community sustainability challenge – the Million Watt Challenge.

The Million Watt Challenge is a partnership between the City, North Valley Energy Watch, Chico Chamber of Commerce, and the Chico News & Review. The purpose of the Challenge is to engage the community in taking small steps toward reducing GHG emissions, with a specific objective of building on the City's streetlight and facilities lighting retrofit by replacing a million watts of inefficient lighting community-wide.

Community members can participate in the Million Watt Challenge by visiting a weekly Thursday Night Market outreach booth, checking out a DIY Home Energy Saving Toolkit from the City offices or the Butte County Library, and by taking an online survey to show what steps they've taken to reduce energy use in their residence or business.



Outcomes

Over 1,600,000 watts of old lighting have been replaced with LEDs. This number combines data from the City streetlight retrofit and municipal facilities, Sierra Nevada Brewing Co., The Chico Mall, LEDs given away as prizes at the outreach booth, DIY Toolkits, and surveys.

In addition to direct reductions in energy savings, this project has built engagement in energy conservation and climate action through sustained promotion of and visibility for sustainability in the Chico community.

Outreach and education efforts have included a Sustainable Business Expo & Happy Hour 2017 at Sierra





Nevada Brewing Co., three Neighborhood Home Energy Efficiency Workshops, and a presence at over 20 local events. As part of the CivicSpark Fellowship and to extend my reach, I also trained and supervised 11 volunteers who have dedicated over 35 hours towards community energy conservation education efforts.

The Million Watt Challenge has also been a successful community story, having been featured in four local newspaper articles, further elevating awareness and engagement in energy conservation.

The success of the Million Watt Challenge will be announced through newspapers and City social media. As a wrapup Bryce will prepare a report on best practices to keep the Chico community engaged in climate action efforts after the conclusion of the Million Watt Challenge.

Fellow Bio

Bryce Goldstein graduated from Humboldt State University in 2016 with a degree in Environmental Science: Energy and Climate. Bryce joined CivicSpark to become a more effective leader in climate action and to put her knowledge to work for the region she grew up in. Outside of work she likes to garden, play music, thrift shop, and make linoleum prints. After CivicSpark she hopes to continue serving communities in the areas of energy, waste, transportation, land use, and food systems.