

“Group Focuses on Energy Efficiency” by

Jake Miller

A committee responsible for making Marshfield more energy efficient decided Saturday to focus on staff training and continued monitoring of the city's goal to consume 25 percent less nonrenewable energy by 2025.

At its annual 2010 strategic planning committee, the three-year-old Sustainable Marshfield Committee prioritized its goals for the upcoming year based on a list of eco-friendly changes drafted for the city.

The "25x25" challenge, a state grant that provided about \$25,000, to assist Marshfield in meeting the 2025 deadline, remains the committee's top priority, but with a plan outlined last year, it's able to focus on other initiatives, said Marty Anderson, chairperson of the Sustainable Marshfield Committee.

Anderson said the city spends about \$800,000 on energy each year. A 25 percent reduction would be a savings of \$200,000. All projects are targeted at reducing the fuel consumption.

"Ecology and economics -- that's what it's all about," Anderson said.

While city training began last year with department heads, Georgette Frazer said it's important to keep the energy level high among employees.

This year, Anderson said, the committee wants to closely involve employees at all levels, reiterating the significance of constantly thinking of ways to save energy.

"Our city staff has been wonderful, even before the sustainable committee (formed)," Anderson said.

The third project the committee targeted was a plan to upgrade and expand the library. Committee member Carl Scott said it's important to make sure heating and air conditioning upgrades are as energy efficient as possible. Ideas include solar and geothermal systems, he said.

During 2009, the committee took steps that stretched beyond the "25x25" grant.

It created a community garden, held a green living energy expo, coordinated to make the new fire station more sustainable and provided city staff training.

"2009 was obviously a huge year for everything we accomplished," Anderson said.