

THE MORNING NEWS

Local News for Northwest Arkansas

Gathering Hopes To Beat The Heat Panelists implore crowd to get serious about global warming, because its real and here to stay

By Doug Begley

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Get ready for ferocious storms, hotter hot days and melting global ice caps.

A climate change conference kicked off today in Fayetteville, starting with the downside. Anne Waple, a climate scientist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, delivered the bad news.

"We're going to notice the hottest day of the year getting hotter," Waple told a crowd at the International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives U.S. conference.

CO2 emissions worldwide have already reached a critical level, Waple said, urging the crowd to realize the time is now to address the issue.

"In the best case scenario, we'll still see about four degrees increase in the U.S.," she said.

Four degrees Celsius, or 7.2 degrees Fahrenheit, she later clarified.

Waple showed the group of 150 numerous slides illustrating the effect carbon emissions have had on the earth in the last century. She said scientists can show humans are causing the warming, and the future is bleak unless changes are made.

"There is absolutely no question, scientists do not disagree on this," she said.

Waple also listed for the crowd the imminent threats to their way of life. Non-tropical storms will increase in frequency and severity, and arctic ice will deplete.

"The extremes are what will make it difficult for us to adapt to climate change," she said.

Convincing citizens to make climate change a priority is crucial, explained Chuck Tooley, the former mayor of Billings, Mont. It can be difficult.

"People care if they are going to walk out on the street and get killed tomorrow," Tooley said. "Environmental issues are typically second tier."

He said the challenge is in teaching people global warming matters in their backyard.

"They don't get the local implications," Tooley said. "They don't think of global warming as

being severe for their communities."

The purpose of the ICLEI conference today through Friday in Fayetteville is to share ideas for how cities and businesses can adapt and save money while being energy efficient, Fayetteville Mayor Dan Coody said.

The conference is open to the public at the Fayetteville Town Center, 15 W. Mountain St., on the town square.

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