

# THE MORNING NEWS

Local News for Northwest Arkansas

## Leaders Outline Balance Between Local And National Policies Aimed At Reducing Impact Of Climate Change

By Doug Begley

July 12, 2007 – Fayetteville, Arkansas

Cities will be the test kitchens of many attempts to reduce climate change related pollution, but worry national programs will complicate their attempts.

A roundtable of mayors at the International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives U.S. conference in Fayetteville said this morning national policies must recognize the fiscal limitations cities and towns face.

North Little Rock Mayor Patrick Hays said eliminating coal-fired power plants, for example, would be difficult.

"I don't think we can afford doing away with coal as a source of energy," Hays said.

He said citizens would not approve of a government that kept energy prices high just to eliminate pollution when the public's pocketbooks are stretched thin. Hays noted people often have to choose wisely how to spend their money, and cities cannot ignore some unfriendly environmental industries provide low-cost energy.

"The difficulty is how you make the transition," Hays said.

Michelle Wyman, executive director of ICLEI U.S.A., said the group lobbies Congress about mayors' concerns.

"If funding is the greatest challenge for you all, that is what we can represent on Capitol Hill," Wyman said.

She stressed ICLEI is not trying to advocate, but educate Washington politicians about municipal concerns.

Wyman said cities and towns have a chance to contribute to ongoing national debates underway in Washington.

Officials from the numerous cities noted many national initiatives are outside their control.

"A global cap and trade thing is not something we'll be dealing with," said Fayetteville Mayor Dan Coody.

Attendees to the ICLEI conference are scheduled to end the four-day gathering Friday.

###