



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

2015 Local Government Excellence Awards Program Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

(All programs nominated must have been fully operational for a minimum of 12 months, prior to January 31, 2015)

Deadline for Nominations: March 3, 2015

Complete this form (sections 1 and 2) and submit with your descriptive narrative.

SECTION 1: Information About the Nominated Program

Program Excellence Award Category (*select only one*):

- Community Health and Safety
- Community Partnership
- Community Sustainability
- Strategic Leadership and Governance

Name of program being nominated: Basalt Micro-Hydroelectric Plant

Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: Basalt, Colorado

Jurisdiction population(s): 3,857

Please indicate the month and year in which the program you are nominating was fully implemented. (Note: All Program Excellence Award nominations must have been fully implemented for at least 12 months prior to January 31, 2015, to be eligible. The start date [on or before January 31, 2014] should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: May Year: 2012

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington, September 2015. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: Michael Scanlon

Title: Town Manager Jurisdiction: Basalt, Colorado

Name: Judi Tippetts

Title: Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Jurisdiction: Basalt, Colorado

Name: _____

Title: _____

Jurisdiction: _____

SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact

Name of contact: Michael Scanlon

Title: Town Manager Jurisdiction: Basalt, Colorado

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City: Basalt State/Province: Colorado

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2015 Local Government Excellence Awards Program
Community Sustainability Award
Town of Basalt, Colorado

Project: Basalt Micro-Hydroelectric Plant

Project Summary: In early 2009 the Town's Green Team, made up of community volunteers, councilmembers and staff, began looking for ways to reduce the Town's carbon footprint. The Green Team brainstormed ideas through most of 2009 and in 2010 came up with a project that fit the Town's vision for a renewable energy source. The project they wanted to undertake was a micro-hydroelectric plant on the hillside above town. It was a project that would take advantage of a resource already being used for Town water – spring water – and give it another purpose – producing power. Not only would it produce energy but it could be done without visual impact to the Town's natural setting.

Project Conditions: Hydroelectric projects often require communities and utilities to alter the natural environment by creating a dam and lake to keep a constant flow of water through hydroelectric turbines, which in turn produce the electricity. The Green Team's proposal didn't require us to make any changes to the natural environment and that was a key factor in moving ahead with our project. The water sources, Lucksinger Springs and Basalt Springs, are located on the lower slopes of Basalt Mountain; about 500 feet above the town's existing water plant and proposed micro-hydro plant, allowing the elevation drop to produce the water flow necessary

for the electric turbines. Mother Nature had given us the perfect set of conditions for our project to work.

Anticipated Project Benefits: The Basalt Micro-Hydroelectric plant, when fully operational, was projected to produce roughly 300,000 kilowatts annually. That's enough electricity to power between 30 and 40 houses and reduce greenhouse-gas emissions by an estimated 500,000 pounds annually. It would also produce a stream of income that the Town can use to help fund additional conservation and renewable energy projects.

Meeting Project Challenges: How were we going to design, pay for and eventually sell the electricity that we produced? As a small Town we had limited resources and total project costs were estimated at almost \$700,000 which would quickly outpace the Town's budget. In the previous decade our electricity supplier, Holy Cross Energy, had set a goal of 20% renewable energy sources by 2015. They were the perfect partner for the project – Holy Cross had a goal to reach and we had a project that fit. With the help of a loan from Holy Cross and a small federal stimulus grant through the Colorado Governor's Office we were able to cobble all the financing together for our electric generation piece. In addition, Holy Cross agreed to buy back the energy we produced into their grid and produce a stream of revenue for the Town. However, for the project to work at all we also needed an upgrade to the water lines carrying spring water to the Town's water plant. In anticipation of this eventuality we had been setting aside money for an upgrade to these two lines for

the past decade and had just enough on hand to upgrade the lines and make the project possible. With Holy Cross, Town of Basalt and federal stimulus funds (about \$100,000) pulled together we had the financing in place to make the project a reality.

Reported Project Benefits: Since going online the Basalt Micro-Hydroelectric plant since going on line has produced roughly 150,000 kilowatts annually. That's enough electricity to power between 15 and 20 houses and reduce greenhouse-gas emissions by an estimated 250,000 pounds annually. It has produced more than \$60,000 in revenue to the Town since it went online.

Adaptive Leadership is at the core of our work: In Basalt we view leadership as an activity in which everyone can participate. This model is based on a theory in leadership called the "Adaptive Leadership" model. This leadership model says "the problems we face today are big and entangled (messy) and require a large number of people working together in order to solve them." We believe that if we are to be a successful community going forward we need to build and grow leadership capacity. The Basalt Micro-Hydroelectric Plant is just one of a half-dozen or so projects that is helping us do just that. Engaging the community (Green Team) to take on a global issue (climate change) using the resources (Holy Cross Energy and our Water Fund) to create parts of the solution (reducing the human carbon footprint). Our goal is to continue using the adaptive leadership model to create resilient Basalt.

Transferability: We believe Micro-Hydro offers a renewable energy choice for many mountain communities. We also believe that Adaptive Leadership – engaging the community in solving problems – is a transferrable framework for other communities to consider and use. The most recent NASA reports on climate change identifies the potential for “Mega Droughts” in the US Southwest and Plains. These potential elongated periods of drought are going to make us rethink how our communities and regions work. The leadership for those discussions will need to come from outside our traditional governmental structures – it will demand a different leadership model – and we would suggest it’s adaptive leadership that will make the difference. This model is at work in Basalt, Colorado today.