

Edmonds Sustainability Heroes

Steve Bernheim



(On February 1, 2013, Cynthia Pruitt and Jim Stevens, members of the Mayor's Climate Protection Committee of Edmonds interviewed Steve Bernheim, a resident, local attorney, and former City councilmember, to learn his success story with increasing energy efficiency. The following article describes his motivation, efforts, and results.)

Steve Bernheim is an individual who sincerely and literally believes in the value of keeping his energy in his back yard. Not only has he installed on his house solar panels that have freed him from the need to pay electric utility bills, but he does all he can to avoid the use of a traditional automobile by walking or biking to destinations when possible. When that isn't possible, his electric vehicle is ready to roll. Keeping energy in his back yard ultimately translates to decreasing dependency on foreign oil, a security issue he recognizes as essential for our country to address. Of course, the impacts of global warming are also of great concern to him as well. In contrast, he freely admits that he saves money because of the actions he takes, but equally quickly says that this is not his underlying motivation.

Steve was one of the first wave of individuals who signed up for a free home energy audit through Sustainable Works and had such a great experience with it that he also signed up his business for the service. The primary improvements to his house included weatherizing his doors and insulating the crawl space.

Success in energy efficiency can be measured in a number of different ways, whether it's via a family budget, performing a home energy audit, calculating a vehicle's MPG, or through creating a community-wide energy meter capable of being displayed on-line. Steve's vision for Edmonds is this final possibility, and he is hopeful that an Energy Speedometer can be created and displayed in the near future for citizens to mark progress to meeting the goals set forth in the City's Comprehensive Plan.