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'Green' team to meet

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News You can use Growing Sustainable Communities will be held from 10 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 26, at Dubuque's Grand River Center. Reservations open to the general public on Wednesday, Aug. 15.

Using the connections he's made through the U.S. Conference of Mayors, Dubuque Mayor Roy Buol has attracted two nationally recognized figures on the issue of global warming for a special symposium immediately before the Iowa League of Cities Conference hosted by the city on Wednesday, Sept. 26.

Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson has pushed programs that have reduced greenhouse-gas emissions in his city by 31 percent since 2001.

And for more than 35 years, internationally known architect Ed Mazria has been an outspoken advocate for environmentally friendly, sustainable building design.

They will present, "Growing Sustainable Communities," to discuss local and regional policies to promote sustainability and how "green" concepts can be integrated into planning, building and zoning codes.

"It's an educational opportunity to really get information in front of people," Buol said of the impact of the session on policy-makers from across Iowa who will be in town for the Iowa League of Cities conference.

"We want to raise the discussion in the state of Iowa," said Assistant Dubuque City Manager Cindy Steinhauser, who is helping organize the event. "That has been a personal vision for Mayor Buol, for not only Dubuque, but the state of Iowa to address."

Anderson and Mazria will make the trip thanks to a grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund made possible through Buol's connection with Michael Northrop, program director for the fund's global and domestic Sustainable Development program.

Northrop will be on hand to facilitate a lunch question-and-answer session as well.

"I really think they look at Iowa and the Midwest as a center for sustainable energy and a hardworking area of the country," Buol said.

Buol, who signed the Mayors Climate Protection Agreement at the U.S. Conference of Mayors last year, was invited to the "Sundance Summit - A Mayors Gathering on Climate Protection" in Sundance, Utah, last fall. It was hosted by actor/director Robert Redford. There, he met Northrop. They worked together on a presentation on global warming for the U.S. Conference of Mayors meeting later that month.

Knowing that Dubuque was hosting the Iowa League of Cities Conference in September, Buol proposed a session to address global climate change and how cities could respond. League planners, however, could only commit to less than an hour to cover the complex subject. Buol and city staff opted for the "Growing Sustainable Communities" program that will likely span nearly three hours before the League meeting.

The threat of global warming and what Dubuque can do about it has become a top priority for city officials.

"We're talking about our kids' future," Buol said. "What would my grandchildren and great-grandchildren think of their grandfather or great-grandfather who was mayor and did nothing?"