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Rocky hopes local fight on climate won't cool

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Continuing the local fight against global warming will be up to the next mayor of Salt Lake City.

Current Mayor Rocky Anderson has no plans to continue running the Sundance Summit, a yearly event tailored to persuade mayors across the country to take steps to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases in their cities.

Rocky's last summit starts Sunday.

"I would hope the next mayor would take the initiative and keep the ball rolling," Anderson said.

His fight against global warming, however, will not end. In fact, Anderson is taking the fight to the national level.

Anderson said he is organizing a national nonprofit organization that would help local communities push for better public policy in the areas of human rights and global warming.

"I hope it's going to be ready for me to hit the ground running the next day" after he leaves office, Anderson said. "It's going to take some fund raising in the meantime."

As for now, Anderson is focused on this weekend's Sundance Summit. The event is the brainchild of Robert Redford and Anderson and is now in its third year.

Approximately 45 mayors from across the country are scheduled to attend this year's summit.

"Many of them are people who may not know a lot about climate change or haven't taken any real steps to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases," Anderson said.

This year's summit will focus on the latest climate science, and mayors will receive practical ideas and tools to adopt solutions in their cities, such as purchasing renewable energy, advancing energy efficiency and establishing green building codes.

The mayors will also get an education on emission caps, which are currently under debate at the federal level.

"It's no secret that national leadership has been sorely lacking for too many years, but what is not so well known is how innovative and effective mayors have been during this same time period in advancing new ways of running their cities with climate-change impacts in mind," Redford said. "They have been very creative in their approach, and out of this has come a unique brand of social change, particular to municipal leadership. It is very impressive."

Florida Gov. Charlie Crist is scheduled to deliver the keynote address Sunday night. The event continues through Tuesday at Redford's Sundance Resort. E-mail: ldethman@desnews.com