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Sustainable Communities Workshop organizers announce keynote speakers

Sarasota County has added Chris Kochtitzky of the Centers for Disease Control's Healthy Communities program and State Rep. Keith Fitzgerald to the lineup for the 2008 Sustainable Communities Workshop, which will be held Dec. 12-13 at the Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida Event and Conference Center, 4780 Cattlemen Road, Sarasota. As keynote speaker on the first day of the workshop, Kochtitzky will lend his observations on climate change, public health and emerging sustainability issues.

Kochtitzky currently serves as the CDC's Healthy Communities goal team leader within the Coordinating Center for Environmental Health and Injury Prevention. He is a member of the American Planning Association, the National Environmental Health Association and the American Public Health Association. His personal areas of research include community design and public health, health policy analysis and public health law.

Most recently, Kochtitzky has focused on analyzing the impacts that local community design choices have on public health, such as disability-related accessibility, healthy indoor environments, physical activity promotion and injury prevention.

Rep. Fitzgerald has served District 69 since 2006. He is also a professor at New College of Florida. In his first term, Rep. Fitzgerald served on the Economic Expansion and Infrastructure Council, the Environmental Protection Committee and as ranking member on the Ethics and Elections Committee. He recently won re-election to the Florida Legislature. At the workshop, he will speak on energy policy.

The 2008 Sustainable Communities Workshop is a rich learning opportunity for planners, builders and developers, engineers, architects and landscape architects, as well as transportation sector representatives, businesses, homeowners and neighborhood associations. This popular two-day interactive workshop draws leaders from industry, government, and university programs to share their expertise and strategies for climate change solutions, saving energy and water in homes and businesses, sustainable transportation and land use choices and how these relate to the community's health and economic future.

Of particular note this year is the workshop's focus on renewable energy options and supporting the local economy as part of creating sustainable communities, and the dedication of one workshop day to specific, hands-on suggestions for greening homes and yards, and energy and water conservation methods that save money.

Day one will focus on professional and business strategies to reduce energy and water use, develop sustainable business models, take advantage of green building technologies and incorporate societal considerations in response to a changing climate.

Day two will feature ways that individuals, homeowners and neighborhood representatives can implement energy, waste and water conservation strategies that save money and improve quality of life for today and future generations.

Both days will provide an overview of available programs and incentives for adopting renewable energy and energy efficiency solutions.

Other speakers scheduled to present are: Dr. Lisa Beever, Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program; Robin Grantham, Southwest Florida Water Management District; Rachel Burkhardt, Environmental Defense Fund; Stan Kennedy, Florida Power & Light "Build Smart" program; Andrew Nouné, Alliance for Responsible Transportation; and Jennifer McDaniel, University of Central Florida Stormwater Academy. They will be speaking alongside representatives from Sarasota County Water Resources, Sarasota County Area Transit, Neighborhood Services and Solid Waste.

Registration is just \$15 per day, including a continental breakfast and lunch. Online registration is available for one or both days.

The workshop also will provide a "green" holiday shopping opportunity from visiting exhibitors.

To become a sponsor, or to learn more about the event, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000 and ask for the Sustainable Communities Workshop, or visit www.scgov.net/SustainableCommunities.

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