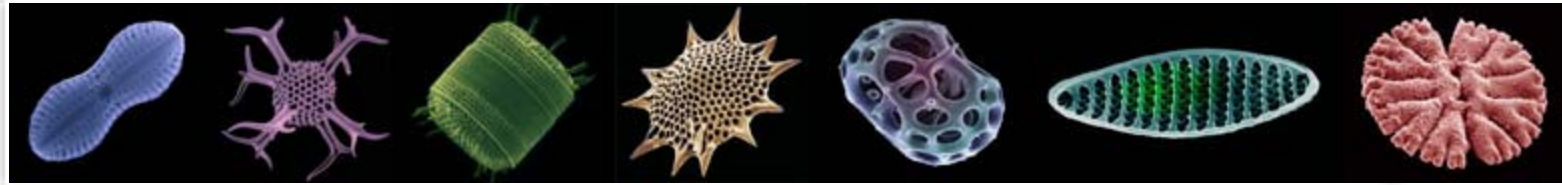


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Arizona Star - Planktos Makes EUEC 2006 Carbon Neutral



Arizona Daily Star®

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ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Conference Adds Major Economic Voltage Here

Opinion by Richard Ducote

Excerpt: The 2006 Electric Utilities Environmental Conference starts today at The Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa with close to 1,000 attendees... Formally, the gathering is the "Ninth Annual EPA, DOE, EPRI, EEI Conference on Clean Air, Mercury, Global Warming & Renewable Energy." Thus, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Energy, the Electric Power Research Institute and the Edison Electric Institute head a conference on matters that affect the electric industry.

As the title implies, it's a business that affects everybody in the world.

This global view is highlighted by one of the participating companies proclaiming the gathering "carbon neutral" by retiring 2,000 tons of carbon dioxide offsets from its Department of Energy inventory.

This means that all the greenhouse gas from the calculated energy used in the transportation, lighting, heating and cooling associated with the conference has been neutralized.

David Kubiak, communications director of Planktos Inc., a San Francisco-area research firm working on ocean restoration, says the firm's donation of carbon offsets would be valued at more than \$40,000 based on European trading of such credits.

Planktos accrues credits by stimulating ocean plankton growth with a solution of iron. The plankton then consumes carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Tucson businesses have been turning our warm winters into cash since trains first whisked people out of Midwest ice storms and brought them to the sunny desert.



Tourism brings more than \$2 billion annually to the area. Recurring events help in that effort. The golf tournaments, gem shows, rodeo and baseball spring training are widely known.

In the electric utility business, so is an annual conference here for people who generate power and deal with the industry's environmental issues.

The 2006 Electric Utilities Environmental Conference starts today at The Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa with close to 1,000 attendees. The four-day conference locks up the Westin and overflows to eight other area hotels, organizers say. Such a group would bring at least \$1 million to the local economy based on estimates by the Metropolitan Tucson Convention & Visitors Bureau.

This conference, originally held every two years, started in the Phoenix area in 1995 but settled here in 1999, largely due to the influence of conference chair Prabhu Dayal, a former Tucson Electric Power Co. environmental expert who now runs his own local firm trading in global carbon credits, used to offset emissions of carbon dioxide.

Rep. Jim Kolbe, the Tucson Republican who is retiring from Congress at the end of his current term, will open the conference Monday. The keynote address will be delivered by Jim Connaughton, chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality and key adviser to President Bush on natural resource policy.

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Global climate change is very much on the minds of people in the utility business, including representatives from TEP, which uses coal to generate more than 90 percent of its electricity.

"It's an opportunity to network, learn from each other and establish contacts," says Cosimo DeMasi, manager of

corporate environmental services at Tucson Electric Power Co. Plus, he adds, it's in the right place at the right time of year.

Conference organizer Dayal knows it's an easy sell to bring people to Tucson in January. The word "golf" might play a part in that strategy.

All kinds of groups bring money to town. We can be proud that this group of forward-looking global thinkers wants to return here every year.

Contact Richard Ducote at 573-4178 or rducote@azstarnet.com.

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