

Trip Report: 2025 Climate Solutions Summit, Matt Heavner

I attended the 2025 Climate Solutions Summit October 7-8 in Breckenridge, CO. This was organized by the Mountain Towns 2030 group. The conference was a gathering of community and state elected leaders, utilities, ski resorts, students, and others gathering to work together with the goal of achieving carbon neutrality in mountain, resort and rural communities. Colorado had the greatest representation but attendees included New Mexico (I only saw Taos and Los Alamos), Utah, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, and others (including West Virginia).

The mix of inspirational keynotes (Ramón Méndez Galain, the former Secretary of Energy of Uruguay, describing the successful transition of the national electrical system to 98% renewable energy), panel discussion (e.g. a panel of three Colorado utilities discussing “the Reality of 100% Renewable Generation”), breakout work sessions (a session with the Mel Yemma, Community Development Director and Dannah Leeman Gore, Sustainability Coordinator for the Town of Crested Butte on lessons learned from three years in on implementing their electrification program and another session with Aspen Police Department and Fleet Management on incorporating EVs into their police fleet), and network opportunities was very good and made for a busy two days. The full agenda and more information is available at <https://www.mt2030.org/mt2030-climate-solutions-summit-2025/>

I had many discussions about operation and decarbonization of utilities and more broadly community. A sampling of some of the conversations included with the water system manager of Jackson, WY; John Clark, the mayor of Ridgway, CO; Chris Hansen, the CEO of La Plata Electric Co (serving Durango, with four years experience with demand charge rates); a breakout session with the Colorado Energy Office (state, coordinating federal funds) about case studies and overviews of their state programs.

Among several take-aways from the two days, I bring back a few topics I would like to explore with DPU and the board including: the importance of sharing successes and lessons learned from similar communities and utilities, simplifying rooftop solar permitting (perhaps utilizing solar app plus), and exploring the potential of balcony solar (popular in Europe and only permitted in Utah in the US),

Based on my this trip, I recommend that:

- 1) Los Alamos County consider sending representatives (perhaps from council, BPU, and ESB) to the 2025 Climate Solutions Summit which will be October 13-14, 2025 in Sun Valley, Idaho.
- 2) Los Alamos County engage with Pajarito Mountain / Mountain Capital Partners to coordinate sustainability efforts.
- 3) Los Alamos County (and Mountain Capital Partners?) engage with Taos participants of the 2025 Climate Solutions Summit to consider a regional New Mexico gathering under the Mountain Towns 2030 umbrella.