

Arkansas Governor Mike Beebe's Sustainability Initiative

*"In an intense and very busy work environment, knowing that the student was there to work solely on this project was crucial to its success moving forward." **Clinton School partner***

Overview

In the 2008-09 academic year, a student from the Clinton School assisted the office of Arkansas Governor Mike Beebe with a variety of sustainability initiatives aimed at supporting the state's efforts to become more environmentally-conscious and rolling out the policy initiatives that resulted from the Governor's Commission on Global Warming.

This work led to the Governor's first Green Executive Order, detailing ways in which the office would become more environmentally friendly in its day-to-day activities, the creation of a public web portal for researching environmental issues and tracking the state's efforts to reduce its carbon footprint, and the establishment of an ongoing partnership with the Clinton Climate Initiative.

This project represents the first collaboration with the Arkansas Governor's Office and was a Clinton School student-initiated project.

The Community Need

Since the Governor took office in 2007, he has advocated for the development of second-generation biofuels and the expansion of "green jobs" in the state. Under his leadership, the state has also encouraged the relocation of four windmill-blade manufacturing companies to Arkansas. He also established the Governor's Commission on Global Warming, charged with setting a reduction goal and designing a strategic plan for reducing pollution in the state.

Field Work

This student built off the Governor's momentum with regard to environmental issues and assisted the office with a variety of tasks, including:

- Through conversations with the Governor's staff, assessing the significance of each of the goals set by the Governor's Commission on Global Warming and prioritizing these goals accordingly;
- Mapping out a list of stakeholders who could help to achieve these goals, and conducting outreach efforts;
- Using information gathered from stakeholders to prepare a draft of the Governor's Green Executive Order;
- Establishing a formal partnership with the Clinton Climate Initiative on behalf of the state; and
- Working with the technical team in the Governor's office to create a new web portal for residents of the state to explore environmental issues.

Current status of the project

Since the completion of student field work, the Governor's office has continued to move ahead with its sustainability initiatives.

- Governor Beebe issued the first ever Green Executive Order in May 2009, detailing the state's plans to save energy in its day-to-day operations. A Governor's office staff member has been assigned to work on implementing these sustainability initiatives.
- Each agency within the Governor's office drafted a Strategic Energy Plan (StEP), which are intended to ensure more environmentally-conscious policies and operations. Some agencies have collaborated in the design and implementation of their plans.
- In 2010, the Governor's office launched Green.Arkansas.Gov, a public portal that residents of the state can use to research ways to reduce their carbon footprint, to obtain updates on the Governor's efforts to improve environmental sustainability, and view the state's Green Partners.
- Arkansas has established a formal partnership with the Clinton Climate Initiative, making it the first state in the nation to enter into a partnership with the CCI.