

Northern Colorado BUSINESS REPORT

Water forum draws more than 300

By NCBR staff

February 4, 2011 --

FORT COLLINS - A water forum to gather public comment on Northern Colorado's future water needs and how they might be met drew more than 300 people to the Larimer County Courthouse in Fort Collins on Feb. 3.

The three-hour presentation included community speakers and information from Reagan Waskom, director of Colorado State University's Water Institute, who said the region faces challenging demands for water in the near future as it copes with growth.

Mary Lou Smith, a policy and collaboration specialist with the Water Institute, said the main message of the forum was to get people with diverse opinions about the region's water future talking together.

"The message was it's important for us to look at the various values we bring to the table when we look at the future of the water supply in this area," she said. "We said how can we work together? That really set the tone."

Smith said the discussions were civil and informative for those attending. "People shared differing ideas but in a respectful way about the wide variety of values that we hold," she said.

Smith said the purpose of the forum was not to push any particular agenda as to how the region's future water needs should be met. One ongoing controversial water issue in the region is whether Glade Reservoir - a proposed new storage project- should be built just outside Poudre Canyon.

Smith said Glade may or may not be part of the solution. "There's a whole portfolio of solutions, including storage," she said. "This isn't about building Glade - it's much broader than that. It's about realizing there are trade-offs and helping the public better understand how water law works and forming educated opinions."

Three more educational sessions are set to continue the discussion on Feb. 24, March 10 and March 24. All three will be held in the Larimer Courthouse, 200 W. Oak St., from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

The sessions are free and open to the public, who are encouraged to sign up at UniverCityConnections.org. The series of discussions are co-sponsored by UniverCity Connections, Colorado State University and the Community Foundation of Northern Colorado.

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