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Silverton GOLD (Goal Of Less Dependence) Team Wins \$100,000 Department of Energy Prize for Grid Modernization and Climate and Resiliency Plans

In May of this year EcoAction Partners joined San Miguel Power Association (SMPA), the Town of Silverton, and San Juan County, to form the Silverton Team GOLD (Goal Of Less Dependence), to apply for a moon-shot challenge through the Department of Energy, Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations (OCED) “Energizing Rural Communities” Competition which incentivizes the development of innovative clean energy projects in rural or remote areas. The team’s mission is to bring Silverton energy security, resiliency, and modernization through the implementation of clean energy technologies.

The GOLD project includes 1) Community Resilience Planning, 2) Regional Climate Action, 3) Beneficial Electrification and 4) Town Electrical Resilience in the form of potential facility-scale and community-scale “microgrid” solutions. The plan’s merit was recently affirmed by the federal Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations (OCED), which awarded a \$100,000 prize to begin the development and action steps necessary to realize the innovative, overarching plan. In receiving this award, the Silverton GOLD team is now eligible for a second phase award focused on implementation.

Over the next year Team GOLD will work through Phase One of the project which emphasizes planning. EcoAction Partners will work to incorporate Silverton and San Juan County into the regional Climate Action Plan, establishing community-specific priorities for Silverton and expanding current implementation of the regional EV Readiness Plan and other programs and projects focused on by the Sneffels Energy Board. EcoAction will also develop a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory for San Juan County, which will help with action prioritization and implementation tracking. The team will focus on beneficial electrification actions in hopes of developing a replicable model for small mountain town, community-wide energy efficiency and electrification efforts. These community-focused actions aim to benefit Silverton through decreased utility use, a modernized energy supply, and improvements to the Town’s health and resiliency.

The team will apply for future phases of the OCED prize in 2024 with the goal of implementing the plans developed during Phase 1.

About EcoAction Partners:

EcoAction Partners is the regional sustainability nonprofit in San Miguel and Ouray Counties. EAP tracks regional greenhouse gas emissions and runs programming to reduce our energy use and waste and facilitate collaborative climate action.

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