

# lcan ECODEpot

center for cutting carbon and cost

## The Crisis We Face

Climate change is harming Louisville: Extreme heat makes life miserable, especially for anyone who works outdoors or lacks AC. Flooding from worsening storms threatens our safety. Longer droughts drive up food prices. It's not the legacy we want to leave our children and grandchildren. However, political gridlock stymies government leadership.

## We Have a Win-Win Opportunity

While we have no silver bullet for fixing this mess, we do have *silver buckshot*. We have all the technology we need to cut enough carbon pollution to stabilize the planet by 2050—as well as cut costs and create local jobs. We only need to jump-start change at the grassroots to side-step the current political inertia.

## A Lesson from Louisville's History

Louisville faced a similar challenge a century ago: Most homes and businesses burned softer coal for heat. Health and property values suffered greatly. In 1933, the average resident inhaled 1½ cups of soot annually! Streetcars needed headlights at noon on the worst days. Despite countless calls for change, few politicians supported the one solution available then.

Why? They feared a backlash if voters paid higher costs for cleaner, harder coal just before voting in November—if they hadn't yet realized it took much less harder coal to make the same heat.

Still, between 1940 and 1960, nine out of 10 Louisville home- and business-owners chose to switch to natural gas or electric

heating. In short, Louisville opted for lower costs and cleaner air—indoors and out. No more shoveling coal, ashes and clinker every day. No more “spring cleaning” soot, from ceilings to floors. And fewer house fires.



Downtown Louisville, 1943

Louisville could apply win-win solutions to today's pollution crisis, too: If we embrace energy efficiency and clean, renewable energy, we would lower costs for families, schools and businesses, and create jobs with decent wages—that can't be shipped overseas—and live healthier lives.



## **ECODEpot: The Center for Cutting Carbon & Costs**

This evolution eventually will happen on its own, but not soon enough to avoid catastrophic damage to the planet and humanity. We need catalysts to jump-start change.

The Louisville Climate Action Network is planning its ECODEpot: The Center for Cutting Carbon & Costs for empowering smaller businesses and institutions, homeowners and renters with the reliable, unbiased guidance they need now. Whether within a house, storefront or warehouse, it will support different learning styles, including:

- Displays, such as a “truth wall” showing insulation choices, with take-home tip cards listing each one's advantages, disadvantages, approximate costs and consumer advice
- Models and instructions for DIY projects
- Hands-on activities, like mini “shower stalls” with show-and-feel showerhead options
- Kiosks for working through computer modules
- Seminars, classes and video screenings
- Resource library
- A coaching desk for one-on-one Q&A



Example questions we'll answer:

- What can we do to lower our utility bills?
- How do I go about hiring an insulation contractor?
- How can we use less gas and electricity to heat and cool our apartment?
- Which refrigerator, furnace, air conditioner, washer, automobile, etc., would meet our needs and be fuel/cost effective?
- How can we cut our costs at the fuel pump?
- How do we choose new light bulbs for our needs?
- Which TARC route would get me to work or school on time, and back?
- Can you teach me to become a confident bicyclist?
- Would solar panels make sense on my roof?

LCAN believes creating and operating the ECOdepot is realistic for several reasons:

- Though Kentuckians pay relatively low electricity rates, our bills are inordinately high. Lower-income residents pay one of the nation's highest percentages of their incomes on utility bills, because their homes and apartments are so leaky.
- Many homeowners, agency leaders and businesspeople would invest more money into their homes and buildings if they had a reliable, independent source of guidance.
- LG&E has requested permission to end almost all of its residential and commercial energy efficiency programs, including its low-cost home energy audits and appliance rebates, leaving a big service vacuum.
- Numerous existing organizations and businesses already offer educational programs and resources, and would benefit from offering them at the ECOdepot.
- Louisville CAN has collected or secured donations of most of the furnishings.
- Local service organizations may help us to renovate the space and construct displays.

### **Want to Get Involved?**

To open the ECOdepot's doors, we most need the following kinds of support:

1. Refining a sustainable business plan
2. Writing grant applications
3. Finding a suitable, affordable location within three blocks of a major TARC line, ideally with a south-facing façade for solar panel and roofing-color displays
4. Renovating it, once acquired, from carpentry, electrician, plumbing and painting to writing and photography to document the process



### **For More Information, Please Contact:**

Sarah Lynn Cunningham, Executive Director  
Louisville Climate Action Network  
[info@louisvillecan.org](mailto:info@louisvillecan.org)  
[www.louisvillecan.org](http://www.louisvillecan.org)  
(502) 451-COOL (2665)