

**Wendy Hawthorne  
North Denver Notions**

Climate change, or “global warming”, seems to finally be getting the attention it deserves in the U.S. and here in Denver. Earlier this year, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reported that it is “unequivocal” that the Earth’s climate is warming and that the warming is “very likely” caused by the emission of greenhouse gases from human activities. Even before this latest report was issued, Mayor Hickenlooper had committed us to reducing our per capita greenhouse gas emissions by 10% over 1990 levels by 2012. In May, the city’s draft Climate Action Plan was issued

gas emissions if Denver is going to meet the 2012 goal. The good news is that reducing our greenhouse gas emissions can also save us money on our Xcel bills and at the gas pump, reduce air pollution, and help us get physically fit. Solving the problem of climate change is in our own hands if we take the challenge and make simple changes in our homes, businesses, and transportation choices. Look for articles in the North Denver News over the next few months for specific ways to reduce your greenhouse gas emissions, to see profiles of local businesses and families

**CAN NORTHWEST DENVER MEET THE CLIMATE CHALLENGE?**

**Your Carbon Footprint**

You may have heard people talk about their “carbon footprint”. A “carbon footprint” is the amount of carbon dioxide emitted by the activities of an individual, family, or business. Everything that we do that uses electricity, natural gas, oil, or gasoline results in the emission of carbon dioxide, thus increasing our “carbon footprint”. When we save energy, walk and bike, or plant a tree, we reduce our carbon footprint. Here is the carbon footprint of an average NW Denver family of four living in a typical brick bungalow, driving an average car, and taking one airplane trip per year.

Activity or Use	Tons of carbon dioxide emitted per year
Electricity (lights, appliances, fans)	6.9
Natural gas (heating and hot water)	9.0
Driving	5.9
Air Travel	1.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21.9 tons</b>

Not included in this “footprint” calculation is the energy that goes into the food we eat and the materials we buy. The impact of these things will be discussed in future articles.

with recommendations on how to meet this challenge. The Plan recommends ten major strategies that will help Denver achieve the 2012 goal. The strategies include a mix of incentives, marketing, new programs, and laws to encourage citizens and businesses to save energy, use resources wisely, offset carbon emissions, and select alternative modes of transportation.

The bottom line is that we, as residents and business-owners of Northwest Denver, have to do something to reduce our greenhouse

who are doing their part to meet the climate challenge, and for local resources that can help you do the same.

*Wendy Hawthorne is the Executive Director of Groundwork Denver, a non-profit organization located in the Highland neighborhood. Please contact her if you want to share information about how you are reducing your greenhouse gas emissions at home or work. Email [wendy.hawthorne@groundworkdenver.org](mailto:wendy.hawthorne@groundworkdenver.org) or call 303-455-5600. \*\*\**