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## USC Upstate panel discusses global warming

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Global warming exists, but can be slowed by the actions of humans, said members of a special panel that convened at University of South Carolina Upstate this week.

The panel discussion, held Thursday evening at the Spartanburg campus, capped a "Day of Learning" on global warming. USC Upstate was one of thousands of schools, faith communities and civic organizations that held events, organized by Focus the Nation, an organization working to increase knowledge about climate change.

Chip Green, a professor of geology at USC Upstate, organized the local event. About 30 of his fellow faculty - from nursing to natural sciences, art to foreign language - agreed to use their classes during the day to focus on the topic of climate change.

The panel was intended to bookend the day and present perspectives from a diverse range of people.

Doug Rayner, a professor of biology at Wofford College, outlined the scientific basis for global warming, noting rising water levels on the planet and the increase in average temperature, meaning "fewer colder days and more warmer days."

While there are differing views as to the causes of the atmospheric changes, Rayner said most scientists agree that most of the increased carbon dioxide in the air is a result of human activity.

What are often overlooked are the problems that may result from this climate change, said Ron Jackson, vice president of student affairs at Spartanburg Community College.

Other than the increase in temperature, he listed rising food prices, decreased availability of natural resources, higher energy consumption, increased population density, and more disease and poverty as possible effects.

Improvements can come from people making different lifestyle decisions, said Jean Crow, associate director of the Partners for Active Living program in Spartanburg. She spoke of the ways that the local community can lower its "carbon footprint," a term used to describe the amount of carbon dioxide produced by a group or individual's activities.

She proposed a trade of shorter trips, such as those fewer than 5 miles, from being made in a car to being made by bicycle.

Another tip was switching to compact fluorescent bulbs, something that has received a lot of publicity in recent months.

Those address one aspect of climate change - making behavioral changes that help lower the amount of greenhouse gases in the environment.

A second issue is preparing to live in a much warmer world and what that means for certain regions of the world.

Locally, Spartanburg County is soon to be labeled by the Environmental Protection Agency as being "On Attainment", meaning that the county has reached EPA standards for clean air, said Assistant County Administrator Chris Story.

"Global warming is indeed a global and a local problem," said Story. "Climate change knows no jurisdiction. That is why we need solutions not just locally, but on the state and national level as well."

Attacking global warming could also help economic development, said U.S. Rep. Bob Inglis, R-S.C., who recently visited Antarctica to see first-hand the research efforts there.

He has proposed taxing carbon emissions both as a way to lessen environmental impact and to reduce the burden of other taxes, possibly leading to a way to replace the income tax.

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