

City touts climate data expertise

Business leaders see research as economic boon for area

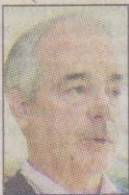
By Dale Neal
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ASHEVILLE — James Rogers, the CEO of Duke Energy, one of the nation's largest emitters of carbon dioxide that seems to be fueling climate change worldwide, says he has to answer to his shareholders in the short term and to his grandchildren in the long term.

"When my grandchildren are my age," said the 60-year-old executive, "I want them to be proud of the decisions I'm making today."

While climate change poses a global challenge, Asheville leaders see an economic opportunity. Many of those answers Rogers and other business leaders need about climate change will come from the data and expertise here at the National Climatic Data Center and a host of researchers, artists, entrepreneurs and thinkers gathering critical mass in Asheville.

NCDC, an agency of the



James Rogers

WEB EXTRA

To see the "Climate Alive" video, go to CITIZEN-TIMES.com/extras.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, played host Monday to more than 250 scientists, experts and other users of climate data at a conference at the Grove Park Inn.

Rogers said he understands climate change is for real, but he, like other business leaders, needs facts separated from fiction and more specific data to plan for rising temperatures in the next century that will affect energy, transportation and society.

"I'm a pragmatist. I just need honest people telling me the facts," he said.

Asheville civic leaders see an opportunity to supply more facts to Rogers and other leaders, building on the expertise of the NCDC scientists and a host of other groups that can turn complex charts into visual images.

Please see **CLIMATE** on B2

CLIMATE: Conference highlights Asheville's strengths as a center for climate change research

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At a reception Monday, conference-goers saw a 10-minute video, "Climate Alive!," directed by Kurt Mann, touting the strengths of Asheville as a center for climate change research.

The film was financed by a \$10,000 grant from the Asheville Hub, a community-wide effort to promote a new economy for Buncombe County that builds on existing strengths in technology, creativity, health care and other sectors.

The Hub's leadership has passed on responsibility for promoting Asheville as a climate change player to a group

called the Centers for Environmental and Climatic Interaction.

George Briggs, executive director of the N.C. Arboretum, heads the CECL. After the morning's sessions at the conference, Briggs said he was "very encouraged" with the opportunities ahead.

The NCDC "has 60 years of expertise in Asheville studying the climate. Their expertise is going to be even more valuable," Briggs said.

The weight of scientific evidence and a vast majority of the world's scientists have concluded that climate change is for real. Temperatures are expected to increase dramatically over the next century, caused in part by humans

burning fossil fuels and putting more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, said Thomas Karl, director of the NCDC.

"The bottom line is that the climate of the 21st century is unlikely to be like any other in the past 10,000 years," Karl warned.

Asheville's strengths in getting scientists to work with artists and other experts to help visualize their findings could serve as a model for other communities, said David McConville, a local digital entrepreneur.

"Collaboration is the key, and we are already doing it here."