



FY23 | Q3 Report | January 1 - March 31, 2023

### **Blue Horizons Project Community Council (BHPCC)**

The BHPCC and its subcommittees meet virtually, with in-person meetings when needed to do work between meetings. The next in-person meeting is June 7. Anyone from the public may join the meetings by following the [details on the website](#).

The [BHPCC](#) met three times in Q3:

- Regular Meeting [January 10](#)
- Regular Meeting [February 1](#)
- Regular Meeting [March 1](#)

There were three active subcommittees and task forces in this quarter, but only 2 remaining at the end of the quarter.

The Technology Subcommittee was discontinued. The BHPCC decided that assigning task forces to handle individual initiatives directly from the 100% Renewable Strategic Plan is a better use of time than a standing committee.

Community Engagement Committee ([meeting docs](#)) meets monthly. Committee is balanced between staff, BHPCC members, and other community members. Mica Crouse, communications expert, drafted a [Community Outreach Plan](#) that was reviewed by the committee and submitted for the Strategic Plan. This plan will guide staff and committee engagement for years to come. Committee members spent several weeks [calling community churches](#) to invite them to participate in either a presentation from staff or a weatherization blitz at their congregations. We received little response and it was determined Creation Care Alliance and other faith-based environmental organizations have this sector covered.

The 100% Renewable Energy Committee ([meeting docs](#)) This subcommittee's work is funded by The Kendeda Fund and unrestricted funds from Green Built Alliance, leveraging the City and County support for our work. This group is writing a strategic plan for the community to get to 100% renewable by 2042. Discussion this quarter focused on finalizing the plan by finalizing the

first full draft, and convening a BIPOC advisory committee to ensure the plan reflects as many voices as possible.

### Community Engagement

The GBA team has sorted events into three categories: **festivals**, **presentations** and **ESN client outreach** as a presentation subcategory.

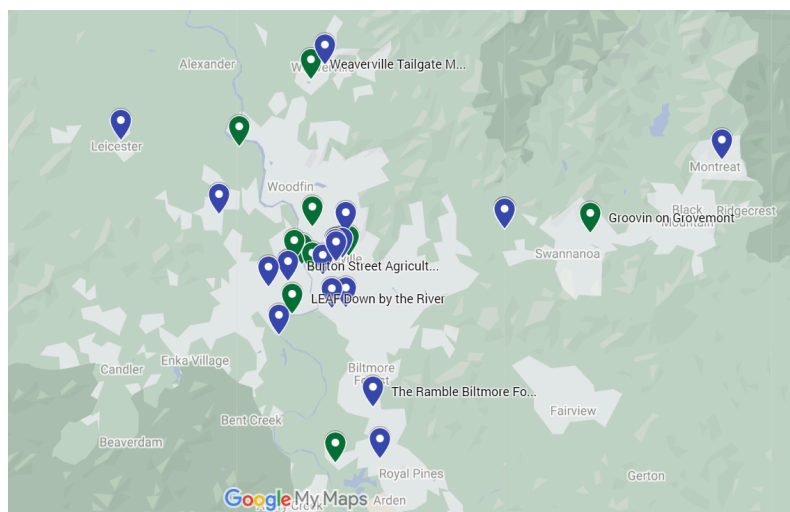
Festivals are setting up a table for several hours, a full day or multiple days. Presentations are speaking to a group of people, or shorter events up to an hour. And ESN client outreach is going specifically to recruit clients for our weatherization services.

### Event Metrics

Community Engagement across all methods included GBA staff attending 13 events representing 1,214 attendees, 138 individual conversations, 1 Home Energy Chat sign up and 8 Energy Savers Network sign ups. The breakdown by event can be found in the [BHP Events FY23](#) spreadsheet. Tab 6 “Reporting Pivot Table Q3,” was used to compile the data in this report.

Due to the time of year, there are not many larger festivals to attend. We attended several presentations with varying audiences, including middle schools. Ultimately, after two experiences with 8th graders, we decided this was not a good return on investment for measurable impact going forward. We were also invited by several already existing groups to present to them including the Ramble HOA, Council on Aging, AmeritasHealth, and Rotary.

Geographic reach was varied and reached across the City and County, reaching further south and east than previously reached.



[\(Google My Maps - Interactive Version\)](#) - Q1, Q2, & Q3 Events

## Community Festivals and Events

New tabling materials have been developed for this season of outreach events including a new banner and brochure stands, better defining the work we do. We are excited to utilize these materials at festivals in Q4.

These outreach opportunities were defined by tabling from a few hours to several days. GBA staff attended 2 tabling events in Q3, representing 205 attendees, 22 individual conversations, 1 Home Energy Chat (HEC) sign up and 1 Energy Saver Network (ESN) sign up.

Community Festivals and Events in Q3:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Number of people at event</i>
1/26	Second Gear	5
2/11	Junior League of Asheville Volunteer Expo	200

To capture community feedback, the staff takes notes about conversations in the community and passes it on to the BHPCC, City Staff and internally at GBA to make sure community needs are being met. Data collected at these events clearly shows public interest in energy efficiency and programs offered by City, County and GBA. Qualitative data can be found in the [outreach spreadsheet](#) (column Q).

## Community Presentations

Neighborhood Advisory Committee presentation (1/23/23) [COA Page](#) - [YouTube](#)

Community presentations are speaking to a group of people, usually briefly, but up to an hour. We also included outreach lasting one hour or less and radio appearances. Presentations also include ESN client recruitment outreach appearances. In Q3, we reached 1,009 people through presentations alone.

Community Presentations in Q3

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Number of people at event</i>
1/23	Neighborhood Advisory Council	7
1/30	Erwin Middle	100
1/30	Skyland United Methodist Church/MANNA food market	100
2/1	Erwin Middle	100
2/2	Erwin Middle	100
2/7	Creation Care Alliance and Retreat	125

2/15	Warren Wilson Job Fair	80
2/16	AB Tech	10
2/23	The Ramble HOA	15
2/23	Council on Aging	10
3/9	Field Day with Keith	200
3/9	Lights Out at the Collider	62
3/16	Rotary Club of Asheville	75
3/29	Eblen Prom Dress Express	25

### Home Energy Chats

Recognizing this program wasn't as effective as other activities (i.e. presentations), the total number of Home Energy Chats needed in FY22 was revised down from 60 to 25 total for FY22 and the number of presentations was revised up from 30 to 41. Only 8 chats remain this year.

#### Home Energy Chats performed in Q3

1. Camilla Poole
2. Alex Irvine
3. Mary Wise
4. Yvonne Sawyer

Program and client documentation is available on [Google Drive](#). We send out a [follow-up survey](#) each quarter and results are kept in a [Google Form](#). We have automated survey requests through our customer relationship management (CRM) software, Salesforce, which has led to increased survey completion.

### Marketing and Digital Engagement

We maintain a very active presence on [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), and [Instagram](#) for the Blue Horizons Project. We posted 52 times on Facebook, 14 times on Instagram, and made 3 YouTube videos. We ran 3 Facebook ads focused on Home Energy Chats, totaling 8,868 impressions.

New content included the following:

- [Energy Audit for a First Time Homeowner, Part 2](#)
- [Energy Audit for a First Time Homeowner, Part 3](#)
- [Energy Audit for a First Time Homeowner, Part 4](#)

Live and Recorded Presentation

- [Lights Out Asheville](#)

Previous feedback from the City asked, “How do we get information from YouTube spread to a wider audience?” Staff consulted with the Community Engagement Committee and are working down that list of suggestions. Collaborating with other organizations has been a successful way to increase views, along with shorter content.

We sent four [e-newsletters](#) this quarter. Our average open rate for those newsletters was 42.6% ([tracking spreadsheet](#)) versus the [average of 25.17% for nonprofits that use MailChimp](#). We are encouraged by engagement with our existing audience.

We update our website regularly and have collaborated with the BHPCC Community Engagement subcommittee to receive [recommendations for updates and changes](#). We use a [tracker](#) to monitor website and social media traffic and reach. While the total social media growth varied among platforms and measurement tools in Q3, there was no significant overall growth. We measured growth in both followers and reach.

- Reach is measured by individual accounts, which means that if posts are viewed multiple times by the same person, those views are not counted.
- While we have noticed strong engagement from our existing audience, only new audiences are reflected in these numbers.

After being reviewed by the Community Engagement Committee, we realized that our growth goals of 10% were unrealistic. Therefore, we have decided to adopt a “quality over quantity” approach and lower our growth goal to 5%, which we plan to implement in the future.

- We have increased our Instagram posts by using the “collaborate” feature with GBA and ESN. This allows BHP posts to be seen by those audiences.
- Although the posts were well-engaged, we noticed a decrease in reach across all three platforms.

Our newsletter open rate remains strong. However, we are losing subscribers, so our staff is meeting to discuss merging newsletter audiences rather than sending out three separate newsletters. The BHP audience will still be exportable and counted for reporting purposes.

- Facebook followers grew by 0.79%
- Instagram followers grew by 2.78%,
- YouTube subscribers grew by 6.25%
- The newsletter open rate grew by 0.5%.

In September 2022, Facebook flagged our account for “social and political posts” after we attempted a BHPCC Recruitment ad. As a result, our staff went through identity verification to run ads. However, Facebook would not verify our identity without mailing a form to be notarized. This delay affected our ability to run ads as planned, and our reach was affected prior to this resolution. However, we are now back up and running normally as of mid-Q3.

**Neighbor to Neighbor Solar (N2N)**

Habitat for Humanity reposted our N2N information on January 20, 2023 ([post link](#)) and we got 3 leads to call in. House orientation and roof age both continue to be a struggle.

Sugar Hollow Solar will be installing all of the ARPA-funded solar panels, and any additional funds from the City and County. Six installations have been completed, with participants identified by previous ESN clients and Habitat for Humanity. All six installations so far have been funded by Buncombe County funds.

The [Facebook post](#) from one of the installs was shared 22 times, which is many more than our typical social media posts, which get zero or one share. We celebrated National Renewable Energy day with a [post of this program](#). This program really helps market our 100% renewable goals for BHP.

A seventh candidate is selected and due to be installed in Q4.

We received feedback that clients questioned the authenticity of the program offering free solar panels due to the variety of scam offers our typical clientele receive. In response to this, we created [a flier](#) in collaboration with Sugar Hollow Solar. The flier was also [translated into Spanish](#) in Q3.

**Statewide Energy Efficiency Collaborative**

The Collaborative Allies meet monthly before the Duke Energy Efficiency Collaborative meeting. During these meetings, we strategize and discuss topics that rate-payers and advocates need to address directly with Duke Energy.

In this quarter, these meetings resulted in direct engagement between Green Built Alliance and TRC, the implementer of the Duke Energy low-income weatherization program.

As a result of these engagements, there will be an increase in low-income weatherization services for Buncombe County residents through ESN, beginning with projects now and in the future. These resources are undoubtedly the result of GBAs engagement with the statewide collaborative and staying in touch with the workings at the North Carolina Utility Commission.