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Press release

Uthållig kommun – using energy as the springboard to a sustainable society

The Swedish Energy Agency's programme Uthållig kommun (Sustainable Municipalities) is a unique collaboration between the Agency and more than a fifth of Swedish local authorities. Kalmar County is unique in Sweden, as all of its local authorities have joined the initiative.

All of the county of Kalmar's twelve local authorities and three regional parties were newly appointed as a pilot county in the Uthållig kommun programme. There are already 50 different project concepts that will be implemented.

In its regional collaboration, Kalmar County has previously considered the climate question to be one of the most important environmental subjects for the county and its Regional Association has adopted an action plan that will ensure that the county will be independent of fossil fuels by 2033. For this reason, it is natural for the local authorities in the county and its regional parties to collaborate with the Energy Agency in a reinforcement of its energy and climate work.

Among the measures taken to achieve the goal of independence from fossil fuels will be a change to renewable energy sources and its own wind power production. Already today, Kalmar County has a high level of utilisation of renewable energy sources, 65%, but more can be done. Common projects will receive priority within the areas of energy efficiency, biogas, transport and behaviour/schools.

"Local authorities are important players in the achievement of sustainable energy use within energy systems that is safe, cost-effective and has a low impact on health, the environment and climate," explains the County Coordinator, Stefan Svenaeus. The Uthållig kommun programme is based on the participating local authorities' willingness to make local societies more sustainable in an energy perspective. "Our goal is for the local authorities, "using energy as the springboard", to create a society that is financially, ecologically and socially sustainable in the long-term," he continues.

Over a three-year period, work that includes energy-saving measures and new technology will provide development opportunities for the county's businesses

and, therefore, in the long-term more jobs.

”We are now going to continue with specific projects in the county. If you look back over your shoulder you can see that an awful lot has happened,” continues Stefan Svenaeus. ”It is all about building up a new infrastructure, but also about changing behaviour,” he says. ”Good health and a good environment go hand in hand. It is all about how we live in our time here on earth,” he concludes.

The Uthållig kommun programme will run from 2008 and 2011, and the goal is for the local authorities to continue working with local energy matters after the programme concludes.

About the Swedish Energy Agency

The Swedish Energy Agency works within various sectors of society to create the conditions for efficient and sustainable energy use and cost-effective Swedish energy supply. Its role in the Uthållig kommun programme is to support the work of the local authorities by contributing knowledge, information and network-building. A central part of the Uthållig kommun programme is for the local authorities to learn from each others' experience.