



Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure Climate Action Program

Employee's CO₂ Website Gives Climate Change Perspective

Submitted by Maggie Malek, Climate Action Program

In late September 2007, Michael McGee, Policy and Communications Manager at the Passenger Transportation Board, attended former U.S. Vice President Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth" presentation at the Victoria Conference Centre.

There were the main messages delivered during the presentation—that we can no longer afford to view global warming as a political issue, but rather as the biggest moral challenge facing our global civilization.

But what particularly caught Michael's attention was the significance of carbon dioxide (CO₂) concentrations in our atmosphere and how understanding these measurements is the first step to solving problems like global warming, climate change and ocean acidification. Michael left the presentation eager to learn more.

As he researched atmospheric levels of CO₂, he realized that there was no website which focused on current CO₂ data and trends. This led to the thought, "If the site doesn't exist, I can create one to inform other people, and contribute to the fight against climate change."

That is how his site CO₂now.org was created. With his basic knowledge of web design, Michael created and launched the site in December of 2007, with the latest data and updates from scientific sources on atmospheric levels of CO₂.

Now, 20 months later, the site has received more than 700,000 hits from people all over the world.

He writes on the site, "On each of these subjects, I am learning as I go, mostly from the raw data, some scientific literature, informed media outlets, and feedback from people of varied and often very educated backgrounds.

Making and maintaining this website has become a way of sharing what I am learning, and often what is buried too deep on a website of a scientific institution."

As of July 2009, atmospheric concentrations of CO₂, our primary greenhouse gas that warms the planet and causes climate change, was 387.81 parts per million (PPM). Just 50 years ago, in July 1959, it was 316.55 PPM. Scientists say that 350 PPM is the maximum acceptable level of atmospheric CO₂ we need—a level not seen since 1987.

In addition to writing, editing and designing content on the site, Michael provides a free monthly newsletter to subscribers of Atmosphere Monthly.

The publication distributes the latest CO₂ data, delivers a unique atmospheric perspective and reminds us that much more needs to be done to solve the climate challenge.

As an added bonus, the website itself is powered by solar panels at a web hosting data centre in California, resulting in a zero carbon emissions profile.

While tackling a full-time job and spending time with his wife and two sons, Michael's dedication to combating climate change is remarkable. Visit CO₂now.org to learn more about atmospheric concentration of CO₂ and how important it is that we lower that number from 387 to 350 PPM—sooner rather than later. ♦



Michael McGee, in Southern California, with the solar panels that power CO₂now.org.