PROJECT SNAPSHOT: FNSB Baseline Greenhouse Gas Inventory

In September 2007, the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) Borough Assembly passed a resolution to join the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) and develop a plan to create a climate resilient and sustainable community.

However before the FNSB can effectively undertake any initiative to reduce GHG emissions within the Borough, the first step is to have a clear understanding of the current situation with regard to those emissions. For this reason, the Alaska Center for Energy and Power (ACEP) was tasked with completing an initial baseline greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory for the FNSB.

The assessment focused on five specific target categories, including emissions from: 1) Electricity producers; 2) Industrial, residential, and commercial sources; 3) Transportation sources; 4) Industrial processes; and 5) Waste sources.

By calculating baseline emissions data for the FNSB, the process of reducing emissions can be focused on those areas which have the most potential for reduction. Many climate change strategies refer to this process as identifying the “low-hanging fruit,” or the areas in which emissions reductions are easiest.

Additionally, a baseline inventory is crucial for the allocation of future benefits based on immediate reductions. In coming years, GHG emissions are likely to have a defined market value as determined by national legislation. The allocation of emissions rights will likely be based on proven emissions reductions, a process which will rely on baseline inventories such as this. Finally, when seeking outside funding for climate change adaptation and emissions reductions, a baseline inventory will be important for identifying Borough-specific needs.

Fairbanks North Star Borough emissions by sector. Total emissions for the FNSB equal 3.76 million tons/year.