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Consultants Winner

Dorsey bridges the gap between pro-business and pro-environment

Denver Business Journal - by [Stephanie Thompson](#)



Kathleen Lavine | Business Journal

Judy Dorsey, president and principal engineer of The Brendle Group, displays a solar panel. The sustainability engineer consulting firm helps clients reduce their carbon footprint via sustainability practices.

Judy Dorsey championed the cause of sustainability long before its current popularity.

As the founding president and principal engineer of The Brendle Group, a sustainability engineer consulting firm, Dorsey works with clients to reduce their carbon footprint by demonstrating the business case for sustainability. Dorsey formed her company in 1996, a time when people were either pro-business or pro-environment. Dorsey has worked hard to remove the 'or' from the equation.

"The mission was to convert customers' environmental programs from operating expenses to business assets," she said.

A lot has changed in 12 years. Companies now tout their sustainability plans and green operations, and environmental businesses spur economic growth.

"Some people say, 'you're at the right place at the right time.' We've been here, it's just more mainstream," Dorsey said. "We joke that people finally want to talk to us at cocktail parties."

Dorsey pushes sustainability on three fronts: business-led solutions, comprehensive municipal and institutional action plans, and internal operations. The Brendle Group is Colorado's first known climate-neutral company, offsetting its carbon usage.

The Fort Collins-based consulting firm works with businesses, institutions and municipalities to take inventory and measure environmental impacts, and set goals to reduce those impacts. Dorsey has grown the business to 10 employees and 100 completed projects.

She serves on the board of directors for the Rocky Mountain Sustainable Living Association, the High Plains Environmental Center, and the Colorado State University College of Engineering Dean's Advisory Board.

Dorsey said her professional highlight was Fort Collins Mayor Doug Hutchinson nominating her to the Colorado Climate Action Panel, which developed recommendations to reduce Colorado's contribution to, and vulnerability from, climate change. Many of those initiatives are now part of Gov. Bill Ritter's Colorado Climate Agenda.

Dorsey rallied local businesses in 2006 to form the Northern Colorado Clean Energy Cluster, a collaboration committed to growing the regional economy around clean energy technologies. She is the executive director. FortZED, an initiative of the cluster, seeks to transform downtown Fort Collins and the Colorado State University Fort Collins campus into a zero-energy district.

"I contribute to whatever I can," Dorsey said. "I don't separate it as work versus volunteering."

In 2006, The Brendle Group created a sustainability management system for New Belgium Brewery. "She did a good job of going from the most global and pulling it down to very specific in a way that was effective and engaging," said Kim Jordan, CEO and co-founder of New Belgium Brewery. "Judy is a great example of a combination of great technical skills on renewable energy and at the same time, she's warm and approachable."

Dorsey's allegiance to sustainability pervades her life. Dorsey and her family built and reside in a green residence with a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification.

Dorsey's foresight for the future of sustainability provides a map for her clients and colleagues.

"Judy sees the big picture, even though it's far off; she's assured 'of course we'll get there, here are the steps how,'" Jordan said. "Her commitment carries people along until they see the reality for themselves."

As the youngest of eight children, Dorsey didn't always view herself as a leader. It's something her mother always saw in her, she said.

"I think of myself as a leader with a different style than commanding and controlling; I lead by inspiring change in others," she said.

Dorsey holds a master's degree in mechanical engineering from CSU and a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Northwestern University. She's a registered professional engineer in Colorado, a certified energy manager and a LEED-accredited professional.

Dorsey lives by "sweat your beliefs," a motto learned from a college friend. To her, it means living her beliefs through hard work.

Life balance is paramount to Dorsey, who juggles running a successful business and being a mom. She started The Brendle Group after her son was born to allow flexibility in her schedule. Her legacy, she

hopes, will be that of balance of living her dreams without letting that compromise the priority of raising her children.

Finalists

Kathy Fort Carty Title: Founder and president **Company:** Destination Services of Colorado (DSC) **Location:** Avon **Phone:** 970-476-6565 **Website:** www.dsc-co.com *Kathy Fort Carty started DSC in 1985 with a phone, a desk and a \$2,500 loan from her parents. Today, the destination management company has a team of 50 professionals, 50 part-time contractors and four offices, and generates revenue of more than \$15 million annually. DSC provides a one-stop event-planning resource for coordinating group visits to Colorado.* **Rachel Hennig Title:** CEO **Company:** Catalyst Search **Location:** Denver **Phone:** 1-800-903-9574 **Website:** www.catalystsearch.com *Rachel Hennig was only 20 when she founded Catalyst Search as an IT staffing company. When the technology market crashed in 2001, Hennig changed the company's focus. Today, it's a health care recruiting and consulting company, and revenue has grown from \$1.5 million to \$10 million annually. Hennig volunteers for a month each year in an impoverished nation.*