

Event Summary

2008 Governor's High School Conference on the Environment



Event Details

The 17th annual High School Conference on the Environment took place on Wednesday, November 12, 2008 at the Dreyfus University Center at UW-Stevens Point in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. The conference was hosted by the Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education. The event was coordinated by Sunshine Buchholz: sbuchhol@uwsp.edu or 715-346-2014. The success of the conference was heavily dependent on the conference committee – the staff of the Wisconsin K-12 Energy Education Program (KEEP): Jennie Lane, Jamie Mollica, Melissa Rickert, Sara Windjue, and Carrie Ziolkowski.

Content

The theme of the conference was *Student Power: Conserving Your Future with Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy*. The goal of this conference was to showcase what students throughout the state are doing to conserve energy both at school and in their homes. Students had the opportunity to learn about energy efficiency and conservation, renewable energy alternatives, and careers in energy. They also learned how to implement low or no-cost energy action plans in their school and at home, reducing energy consumption, costs, and detrimental environmental impacts.

Participation

This year's event had 363 participants.

- 301 students, teachers, and chaperons
- 62 keynote speakers, presenters, and volunteers

Highlights

- **Student Exhibits** - Students networked with one another in the exhibit hall as they shared poster presentations on energy efficiency projects they are conducting in school. A student selected "Favorite Exhibit" award was presented to students from Stevens Point Area High School for their outstanding work on reducing energy use at school through recycling.
- **Careers Focus** – Throughout the day, students were introduced to energy-related careers. Exhibitors from Fox Valley Technical College, Gateway Technical College, Madison Area Technical College, Midstate Technical College, Northland College, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, and UW-Stevens Point showcased programs they offer in energy-related fields.



- **Keynote Speakers** - Keynote speakers at this year's event were Mary Schlaefer, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corporation (WECC) and Ben Nusz, Renewable Energy Technician Instructor at Midstate Technical College. Schlaefer provided an overview of the state of energy in Wisconsin. Nusz explained how he entered the field of renewable energy and encouraged participants to be green in whatever job they hold.
- **Concurrent Sessions** - There were 18 concurrent sessions presented by high school students and energy professionals. This year's event featured eight student presentations – more than ever before. Participants had the opportunity to learn about topics including career options in energy, eating to save the environment, electric safety, carbon footprint, wind energy, solar electric, energy efficiency, school building efficiency, and world energy use.

Participant Comments

- I enjoyed the World Energy Use session because it really helped me to think about how much energy the U.S. is using; even though we are only about 4.5% of the world population, we are using about 25% of the world's energy.
- I liked seeing what other schools did. If they could do it, we could too.
- I learned how I can make my future career "green."

Featured Projects

There are many student groups conducting energy projects in their schools:

- *Port Washington High School* – making biodiesel from used vegetable oil to run school equipment.
- *Deerfield High School* – creating biodiesel to run the school garden's roto-tiller.
- *Dundee-Crown High School (IL)* – traveling via bus run on student created biodiesel to teach energy efficiency to elementary and middle school students.
- *Homestead High School* – researching energy efficiency in school and creating an action plan.
- *Pardeeville High School* – installing a solar powered greenhouse.
- *Monona Grove High School* - sponsoring an all school recycling week culminating in a bottle free day.
- *Kaukauna High School* – designing and constructing an electric car.
- *Marshfield Senior High* – reducing vehicle use at school through alternative transportation and carbon footprint education.



Conference Sponsors

The success of this event is dependent on our generous conference sponsors. Thank you to all the organizations and businesses that made financial, in-kind, and door prize donations.

- **Supporters** – Focus on Energy, KEEP, Midwest Renewable Energy Association, UW-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education
- **Gold Level Sponsors** – Wisconsin Environmental Education Board, Alliant Energy, We Energies
- **Silver Level Sponsors** - The Nature Conservancy, Xcel Energy
- **In-kind** – Focus on Energy, Frito Lay, Kwik Trip Inc., National Energy Foundation, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Public Service
- **Door Prizes** – Gateway Technical College, KEEP, KidWind, Kindred Spirit Books, Madison Area Technical College, Madison Environmental Group, Midstate Technical College, MREA,

Nasco, The Nature Conservancy, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, Northland College, Science Kit & Boreal Laboratories, Stevens Point Area Co-op, UWSP Environmental Council, UWSP College of Natural Resources, UWSP Student Government Association, Wisconsin Public Service

Nature Wise

We thank Wisconsin Public Service for their Nature Wise donation that made this a 100% green powered event.

Conference Web Site

The conference web site features a photo gallery from the conference and a summary of participant action plans created at the close of the event: <http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/wcee/youthconference/>.

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