

SPASH students present energy-saving techniques at the 2008 Governor's High School Conference on the Environment

By Nicole Strittmater • Journal staff • November 13, 2008

Light bulbs clicked on about energy efficiency Wednesday -- literally.

Three officers from the Stevens Point Area Senior High Students Peace & Environmental Action Coalition set up a hands-on exhibit at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, showing how many watts of energy incandescent versus the more efficient LED Christmas light bulbs use.

"One bulb of the incandescent is more than the whole strand of LED lights," SPEAC co-president Laura Beshire said, plugging each strand in to demonstrate the 2.2- versus 126-watt difference.

The exhibit was part of the 2008 Governor's High School Conference on the Environment in the university's Dreyfus University Center. This year's theme was "Student Power: Conserving Your Future with Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy."

The Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education, housed within the UWSP College of Natural Resources, has hosted the conference since 1992. This is the sixth year Gov. Jim Doyle sponsored the event.

About 300 teachers and students from 41 Wisconsin high schools presented what they are doing to manage energy at school and in their homes.

Students could choose from 20 presentations to attend throughout the day and visit exhibits on the topic of energy resource management. Speakers included energy resource professionals and students, and topics highlighted bioenergy, energy costs of food production, school energy audits and renewable energy technologies. Including the professional presenters, more than 360 attended.

"It's bigger than expected by far. I think it's because the theme is energy," Wisconsin K-12 Energy Education Program outreach specialist Melissa Rickert said.

The SPEAC students from SPASH are raising awareness about what can be recycled, since they realized some students aren't following the rules.

"One million tons of recycled paper is enough to fill 14,000 railroad cars," they wrote on a poster. "Recycling one can saves enough energy to light a 100-watt incandescent light bulb for three hours."

SPEAC co-presidents Beshire and Laura Henneghan, and secretary Amanda Kievet attended this year.

"I can't take the smile off my face, because they're educating kids about energy conservation," SPASH science teacher Karla Lockman said. "They're going to do some great things when they leave SPASH."

Hannah Murphy of Conserve School, left, listens as Laura Beshire and Laura Henneghan talk about the recycling project under way at Stevens Point Area Senior High. (DOUG WOJCIK/STEVENS POINT JOURNAL)

