

Students Showing the Way in Conservation with Innovative Program

WESTARIO POWER IS FUNDING SCHOOL PROGRAM

The students in Bud Halpern's technical class at Saugeen District Secondary School in Port Elgin know that with just a little effort conservation and energy efficiency is making a big difference in their classroom. You could say that they are becoming energy efficiency experts in their own right and it's a learning experience that is all hands-on.

Westario Power is currently funding an energy conservation demonstration project at the high school that compares energy use in two school portables. Bud Halpern, a teacher at Saugeen District approached Westario Power in late 2006 with the idea of using two identical portables in an energy conservation project, which would be conducted by students in his technical class. The idea would be to leave one portable "as is," while the other would be modified to make it more energy efficient.

The thermostats in the portables have been calibrated which will ensure an accurate reading that allows for energy use and/or savings comparisons. The heating and cooling systems are identical in the two buildings. New roofs have also been recently installed.

Modifications in the "energy efficiency" portable have included heat retaining/reflective ceramic

paint, caulking and weather strip improvements, programmable thermostats, and other small upgrades. All of the work is being done by the students themselves and is part of the class curriculum. They have been enthusiastically involved at every stage - from the planning to the upgrading of the portable. They are able to measure the savings in kilowatts, as well as dollars by comparing usage in the two buildings on a monthly basis.

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The project has allowed Westario Power to integrate conservation programming into the high school in a very innovative way. The students have even set up a display at the school that shows the technologies and products they have used to attain greater energy efficiencies within the building.

The students are not only learning about the advantages of making these changes in the name of conservation and energy efficiency, but the project is giving them a very real sense of contributing to that important process. The students have a personal stake in the accomplishments they are realizing. It is a very effective way of learning. It is also a very effective way of building a "conservation culture" among an important age demographic.

The demonstration project is continuing through 2007 at the school.

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