

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY



Local Energy Powers Economic Advantage: Tour is “eye-opening” – Diana Hammer Tscheschlok

In a state that imports \$15 billion in fuels each year, energy efficiency and renewable technologies give local businesses an important competitive edge. On July 25th, 30 residents joined UW-Extension for a tour to learn about energy production, usage, and associated land use in our county.

At **Vir-Clar Farm**, participants talked with owner Gary Boyke about the anaerobic digester which converts manure from 1300 milking cows to electricity, compost, and animal bedding. The process produces electricity for the farm and reduces odors.

Fuelmakers’ biomass gasification demonstration plant in Eden is creating liquid fuel from plant- or animal-based materials, a process participants described as “fascinating” and “eye-opening.”

At Pheasant Run subdivision, energy use is incorporated into the built environment. Neal Nett, Vice-President of **Nett Land & Development**, discussed how lots surrounded by commonly owned green space and a trail can encourage residents to walk and bike more while also absorbing water runoff.

At **Horicon Bank** participants viewed the ground-source heat pump, commonly known as a geothermal system, which heats and cools the building using the constant temperature of the earth. The bank also has other “green building” features.

Because of so much public interest in this tour, another is being planned for the fall. Local businesses that would like to showcase energy-related or “green” practices are encouraged to call Tscheschlok at 920/929-3173 or email her at diana.tscheschlok@ces.uwex.edu.



Photo: UW-Extension Local Energy Tour participants from Berlin, Waupun, North Fond du Lac, Malone, Brownsville, Port Washington, Weyauwega, & Fond du Lac learn about ground-source heat pumps from Dale Hans, Vice-President of Horicon Bank

AGRICULTURAL PROFITABILITY



New Farm Bill ACRE Program Explained at Informational Meetings – Mike Rankin

The 2008 Federal Farm Bill offered a new wrinkle for crop producers. The Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program gives participants the choice of guaranteed crop revenue at the expense of reduced direct payments for program commodity crops (as producers have received in the past). Guaranteed revenue is based on both state and individual farm historical yields along with national average market prices for the crop (Revenue = Yield x Price). Unfortunately, the program is not really as simple as just explained. The Fond du Lac Co. Farm Service Agency and UW-Extension offered two informational meetings to help producers understand and decide if the new program would be beneficial for their individual farm. Making a correct decision could mean the difference between gaining or losing thousands of dollars for a farm operation. About 80 people attended the two meetings where the complexities of the program were explained and a computer software program was demonstrated to help producers see the impact of acreage, price, and yield on program benefits. Additionally, UW-Extension worked with producers one-on-one (following the informational meetings) to help producers make an election decision for their individual farms.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES



Building Effective Teams – Nan Baumgartner

“It’s easy to get the players. Getting them to play together – that’s the hard part.” This quote from Casey Stengl speaks to the need for team building skills and training. Whether at work or in a family setting, getting along with others, appreciating differences, communicating effectively and learning to function as a team are important skills. UW-Extension works with local non-profits and other organizations to help support and build skills necessary for successful teams by providing professional development training to staff. The ultimate goal is to increase success in the workplace. Currently training is being provided to department units in the Department of Social Services through use of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory. In addition, other teambuilding activities and programs have been provided to the local Family Resource Center focusing on what makes a successful team and how to develop trust as a part of teamwork.

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