

Energy Conservation Outreach

The 2007 Outagamie County UW-Extension needs assessment surveyed 458 people who identified “energy conservation and renewable energy” as one of the top seven issues. The office identified northwest part of the county’s villages and rural towns as a target area that had been underserved on energy issues.

A \$5000 District Resource grant was received to hire an Energy Outreach coordinator with travel and printing expenses. Partnerships were formed with WeEnergies, Franklin Energy (a conservation service firm) and Focus on Energy (Wisconsin’s state umbrella organization for energy conservation incentives). The purpose of the program was to educate clients on energy conservation, encourage conservation by using compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFL’s) and provide energy audits for farms and businesses in Northwest Outagamie County. People were contacted in a variety of ways:

1. County Fair booth – 360 contacts
2. Farm Energy Audits – 31 conducted
3. Green Blitzes – 60 businesses received recommendation
4. 4-H Clubs – 6 presentations
5. Home & Community Education clubs – 2 groups
6. Town Social Events – Three events reaching 110 people
7. Presentations to town and village boards.

Clients were asked to try a free CFL bulb – exchanging for an incandescent bulb. This resulted in 455 CFL bulbs being given out. Of the thirty-one farms which received a free energy audit, 27 received energy savings recommendations. These recommendations would save \$72,243.59

per year. The farmers would receive \$36,950 of incentives to help pay for \$205,400 estimated cost of charges, which would payback in under two years.

The green blitzes provided sixty small town businesses with an estimated saving of \$49,500 and 144 kilowatts of electricity. Those businesses were eligible for \$67,300 of financial incentives to make the recommended changes.

To verify the results of our efforts, a phone survey was conducted. The following is a short summary of the results:

137 Households Surveyed

84% used free light bulbs
254 more CFL light bulbs purchased & installed
29% used cash back coupons
60% switched at least partially to energy-efficient lighting
12% definite plans to conduct home energy audits

54 Businesses Surveyed

69% used the follow-up credit report
48% implemented some conservation measures
26 buildings received 30 specific changes
35% plan on making changes in the next year

9 Farms Surveyed

100% learned more ways to save energy
100% used free CFL
2 farms purchased more CFL bulbs
1 farm installed variable speed milk pump
2 farms used the rewire program
51 4-H families were surveyed

In conclusion this program brought \$14,430 of incentives to five businesses in northwestern Outagamie County and \$3000 for two farms in the area. More incentives

can be utilized as other farms and business make changes to save energy. Most telling would be the following quotes:

4H Leader 4-H Leader Comment: *“Your presentation was the best we ever had. It was fun and interactive, and it kept our attention.”*

Business Owner: *“My energy bill dropped \$150 per month after implementing the recommendations.”*

City Clerk: *“We are using the report in plans to remodel City Hall.”*

Round two of farm energy audits and green blitzes are planned for 2009.

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