



### **Youth Energy Summit - Say YES! Put Energy into Our Future!**

The Youth Energy Summit (YES!) is a youth program of Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center (PWELC) and the Southwest Initiative Foundation (SWIF) that uses hands-on, experiential education and energy action projects to address energy opportunities and issues in our communities and our region.

#### **YES! Program Contacts:**

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#### **Energy Action Projects**

While engaging in a series of learning opportunities and events, YES! teams choose energy action projects that encourage them to think critically about how energy affects their schools and communities. Through their projects, they interact with business and community leaders and work together to find solutions. YES! teams compete for prizes and are judged on carbon footprint reduction, career awareness, community involvement, creativity, economic impact, energy conservation, goal-setting, innovation, and teamwork. A very special thank you to this year's award sponsors: University of Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnership, Southwest Initiative Foundation, Kandiyohi Power Cooperative, Lake Region Bank, and Ottertail Power Company.

### **Recognized Achievements for 2008-2009**

#### **Springfield Grand Prize (\$1,500) & Carbon Footprint (\$500) Awards**

Springfield's overall goals were to minimize waste, decrease dependence on fossil fuels, and increase energy awareness. Through their energy action projects they:

- Engaged elementary students in a carbon footprint educational challenge surveying each student's home footprint. Taught students through relay games and activities such as "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire" and working with wind turbine/solar panel models
- Implemented a school plastics and aluminum recycling program using a student study hall rotation to empty bins
- Researched cafeteria food waste composting & red worms
- Worked through the MN Schools Cutting Carbon Challenge to initiate a high school building energy audit
- Conducted a weekly text messaging campaign to 200+ phones with energy facts and energy saving habits and provided awareness to 300 attendees through an exhibit at the Springfield Home and Garden Show



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#### **New London-Spicer Second-Place (\$1,000) and Community Engagement (\$500) Awards**

New London-Spicer's goals were to increase community awareness, raise funds to help make the Little Theatre "green", and to promote local foods. Through their energy action projects they:

- Connected with local foods distributors and sold products at the Little Theatre concession stand
- Distributed information on local foods in the community and worked to add local foods and green products in local stores
- Raised awareness of conservation by writing song lyrics and creating a game show for Little Theatre events
- Raised \$11,000 to help make the Little Theater more energy efficient and environmentally friendly
- Began a senior community gardening project



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### **Willmar Third Place (\$750) & Economic Impact (\$500) Awards**

Willmar's goals were to promote and produce locally-grown produce, provide fresh winter produce and local food education to schools, food sellers/preparers, and the local food shelf. Through their energy action projects they:

- Worked with consultants and community partners to continue to renovate a greenhouse that uses solar and biomass technologies
- Grew fresh produce for Willmar Public schools and donated over 100 pounds of produce to the Willmar Area Food Shelf
- Students experimented with various soil supplements, insulation for the water tank, and feed stocks for a biomass boiler provided last year by Aquatherm using Sunrise Agra Biofuel pellets
- Educated community through a community open house, and planned to raise funds through a webcast fund-raising telethon on May 8, 2009

Contact: Rob Palmer, 320.231.8500, palmerr@willmar.k12.mn.us



### **Atwater-Cosmos-Grove City (ACGC) Energy Conservation Award (\$500)**

The ACGC goals were to reduce the high school's energy consumption, improve their recycling program, implement a compost system, and convey awareness to the students and community members on energy savings and carbon emission reduction. They also had a long-term goal of implementing an alternative energy source at the high school.

- Installed 130 CFL bulbs donated by Kandiyohi Power Cooperative and MPC in area homes
- Analyzed waste reduction and composting opportunities through sorting cafeteria waste
- Sold 240 reusable grocery bags
- Worked with administration and custodial staff to research costs and usage for electricity, heating and waste removal for their school
- Raised awareness at the school with "Go Green" educational activities

Contact: Tami Bennet-Tait, 320.857.2276, tbennett@acgc.k12.mn.us



### **Lac qui Parle Valley (LQPV) Long-term Vision Award (\$500)**

LQPV's goals were to compost trash from the school lunch program and use the compost to grow vegetables in the school's indoor greenhouse, install solar PV panels to offset the greenhouse's energy consumption, and to educate 5th and 6th grade students on composting. Through their energy action projects they:

- Using the schools' indoor greenhouse, worked with community partners and businesses to install a reverse osmosis system, learn about oxygenating water and composting, and grow vegetable plants
- Educated public about phantom loads, CFLs, and other energy conservation methods at the Great Western Minnesota Get-Together
- Purchased red worm compost kits for three elementary classrooms and prepared an educational program with recycling and composting activities
- Received grant funds of over \$11,000 to install solar panels at the school

Contact: Rachel Rigenhagen, 320.752.4200, rrigenhagen@lqpv.org



### **Additional Team Participants for YES! 2008-2009**

**Canby** - Implemented a recycling program at Elementary school, created script to shut off computers in labs automatically, and researched solar energy for the high school.

**Glencoe/Silver Lake** - Researched technologies and costs related to energy efficient lighting and air hand dryers

**Marshall** - Taught 132 fourth grade students about energy-smart habits and gave each student an "Energy First Aid Kit" with a biodegradable and renewable bottle and bag, a magnetic energy-saving checklist, and coupons for CFL bulbs

**Morris** - Improved their school-wide recycling program, held an electronic waste collection day, collected data from a community-wide survey on environmentally friendly living

**Redwood Valley** - Demonstrated the use of food waste as a potential energy source by constructing model digesters and composters using separated food waste from the school cafeteria and educated the community on the energy use of light bulbs by creating a light display and energy bicycle