

First Plainfield Cornish Energy Expo A Great Success

The first ever Plainfield & Cornish Energy Expo, put on by the Plainfield Energy Committee with the cooperation of Mary Boyle of the Cornish Energy Committee, was an unmistakable hit on Saturday, October 24th.

Co-Chairs Nancy Mogielnicki and Thom Wolke pulled together an excellent team of volunteers to take on the many responsibilities and tasks needed to make this event come together. A big 'energy release' in no particular order to Robin Larson for her beautiful work coordinating the school map and signs, Susan Pullen for her fantastic organizing of the Students Learning Activities area, Plainfield School Principal Ellen Langsner and Superintendent Noelle Vitt for their invaluable help in using the school, Administrator Steve Hallaran for coordinating all of the efforts on behalf of the Town of Plainfield and helping with the details in showing the film, "*Kilowatt Ours*" the night before, "The Point" radio station for their help in creating our radio spot, the Valley News and The Compass for writing editorials about our event, Allan Ferguson and Joe Williams at KUA for all their very cooperative help with the auditorium and loaning of tables, Mary Boyle for arranging and scheduling the Workshop speakers, Dave Taylor for helping with tables and set-up, School Facilities Chairman Mike Higgins and Shawn Rogers for organizing the displays for the School Classroom Retro-fit project, Stephanie Schell for arranging the 7th Grade students in selling the lunch and drinks for their "Class-Trip Fund", Mary Cantlin, the school's Technology Coordinator for her seamless efforts in making things run smoothly, Nick Rullo, the school Custodian for his cheerful help at every step of the way, Valerie Newton for organizing the Child Care volunteers, and Michael O'Leary, Bill Cable, and Marc Rosenbaum for manning the 'Local Heros' booth and talking about the really beautiful slide show put together by Mary Boyle and Nancy Mogielnicki, that showed-off an assortment of energy efficiency projects that folks are doing right here in town, and to John Stephenson for assembling and posting the directional signs. A very special thank you to my daughter Sonja for helping design the Energy Expo logo.

So you see, it really does 'take a village' to come together to educate ourselves on such important topics. The Plainfield Energy Committee took upon this task in May to put on an "Expo" with one real goal in mind - to help fellow residents of Plainfield and the surrounding communities learn about things that they could do to save themselves money by saving energy consumption. Through workshops and displays, it was hoped that everyone could walk out with at least one good idea they could do for themselves immediately, and to think about the ways they use energy and how they could do it better, and more efficiently.

The event kicked-off with the showing of the film, "*Kilowatt Ours*" at the Hayes Auditorium on the campus of Kimball Union Academy on Friday night. The film looked at just where energy comes from, and how destructive acquiring energy resources can be sometimes. About forty people, from students at KUA to folks from as far away as Norwich, VT, came to watch this informative documentary. The film DVD was purchased for the Town of Plainfield, and is available to borrow from the Town Hall if you'd like to watch it at your convenience.

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A chilly, rainy Saturday morning greeted the Energy Committee volunteers as things got underway at the Plainfield Elementary School. Booths were organized, classrooms readied, and signs hung before visitors began arriving at 10am. Though exact numbers weren't tallied, it's estimated that easily between 150 - 200 people attended the event between 10am and 3pm, and an additional 50 - 75 people volunteered their time manning their booths, speaking at workshops, or working towards making the day enjoyable.

Folks investigated the nearly twenty different vendors' booths learning about everything from window efficiencies, wind and solar energy options, home energy audits, and even car-pooling and bicycling as energy savers. Workshops scheduled throughout the day touched on topics as diverse as how to better insulate your home, whether wind power is right for you, how to do energy projects hands-on, and even how growing a bio-fuel like switch-grass can enrich a community.

Along with the Meriden Community Church, who rang their bell symbolically 350 times, the Energy Expo was a participant in the nationwide activities of an environmental educational awareness campaign called "350.org" which is looking for solutions to man's impact on climate change.

All-in-all the organizers considered the event a huge success and the Energy Committee is already planning a bigger and better follow-up event for next winter. Additional helpers or ideas are always appreciated.