Energy Committee Report

A highlight of 2011 was the Upper Valley Energy Expo, produced by the Town of Plainfield Energy Committee. On Saturday, January 29, 2011 our Elementary School was a scene of high energy and interest as our second expo got underway.

The focus of the day for most participants was the schedule of workshops on a range of subjects, from biofuels to weatherization. Lee Lynd, a Plainfield resident, Professor of Engineering at Dartmouth’s Thayer School and a founder of the Mascoma Corporation, gave a keynote address to an enthusiastic crowd outlining his perspectives on the necessary transition to sustainable energy.

Other speakers included Mike Higgins and Allan Ferguson of the Plainfield School Facilities Committee, who described the dramatic energy-saving changes to some of the school classrooms; Bob Walker of SERG who provided a popular “Button Up” workshop; Kim Quirk of the Enfield Energy Emporium who spoke about her retrofit of an historic property; Paul Leveille and Dick Henry of the Jordan Institute who provided a session on green building; Bill Cable of Cornish who spoke about his own on- and off-grid solar and wind systems; and Ted Emerson of South Face Design Build, who focused on solar thermal systems.

The gym was home to exhibits which included vendors of weatherization and renewable energy products, as well as non-profit and governmental groups with information on planning, transportation, building, and community energy challenges, and local energy and transition town committees.

Finally, Plainfield Elementary School students provided food and bike blender smoothies for this event, adding to the community spirit.

During the summer and early fall, the Energy Committee promoted and sold raffle tickets for a free home energy “audit” or assessment. Bill and Liz Taylor bought some chances and won the raffle and their home energy audit was performed on November 22 by Will Davis of Radiant Energy. Other prizes included a cord of wood and energy efficient light bulbs, both generously donated by the Rogers Family.

During the fall, the Energy Committee helped to promote a Green Buildings Tour which was coordinated by the New England Sustainable Energy Association (NESEA) and held on October 1, 2011. Local participants included Townline Equipment, which showcased its photovoltaic array, and Dave and Sue Taylor, who provided a tour of their innovative and energy efficient home on Freeman Road.

The Plainfield Library and the Town Garage are among a group of buildings in New Hampshire chosen for demonstration audits by the NH-LAX program. Both have gone through intense inspections and at the time of this writing we are awaiting the reports which will be available to the Town and the subject of an open meeting in the spring of 2012.

The Energy Committee has also taken advantage of services offered by the Energy Technical Assistance and Planning program (ETAP), which helps us track the energy use of our municipal buildings. We are still in the process of collecting and entering data and hope to have some useful tools for town planning in the near future. Our ETAP enrollment provided a free energy audit of the Town Office and Police Station. Results of this assessment are expected by February, 2012.

Members of your Energy Committee will be mapping the town streetlights and discussing options with our multiple utilities to determine whether our current configuration represents the best use of the town’s energy dollars. If you have concerns or comments about light placement, timing, brightness or any other related issues, please let us know.

As always, the Energy Committee welcomes ideas for projects, reports of successful energy conservation efforts, questions about products, services, funding, etc.- and especially new members! For further details about our activities and mission, please see our pages on the Town website.