



Youth Energy Summit Update

Report on the pilot year of YES, 2007-2008

The Youth Energy Summit (YES!) and Co-opetition was in its inaugural year in 2007-2008.

YES is a program of Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center, in partnership with the Southwest Initiative Foundation. YES is an ongoing initiative that seeks to bring teams of students together to learn about energy issues and take action in their home communities.

2007-2008 YES events

2-day Summit at Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center in September

- Educational workshops and sessions, a resource fair, a cooperative action-planning session, plus an evening public event including a presentation by J. Drake Hamilton of Fresh Energy and entertainment by musician Michael Monroe.

Winter Workshop at Minnesota West Community & Technical College-Granite Falls

- Workshops and sessions with renewable energy experts, hands-on ethanol activities, and career exploration with a panel of professionals.

Culminating event at PWELC's Earth Day Celebration, April 2008

- Public event with exhibitors, a keynote panel on ethanol issues and opportunities, and entertainment. YES teams presented to judges in advance of a YES award ceremony.



Energy Action Projects

After the kick-off YES event in September 2007, YES Teams returned to their home communities to undertake an energy action project. Overall goals of the projects were to conserve energy, to generate clean and renewable energy, or to reduce climate change emissions within their own communities.

Of the eleven original teams, nine worked on energy action projects. Five teams were able to attend the April 19 Earth Day event and present their project outcomes to a panel of judges.

The **BOLD** team researched replacing exit signs in the school with low energy LED lights; they

determined that 23 of 27 lights were LED-based lights already. They researched a biomass boiler system, then ultimately set aside the project due to cost and feasibility of fuel supply. If the biomass pellet company is running by next year BOLD team will continue to consider the Biomass Boiler an option for a renewable energy (heat) source.

The **Canby** team researched replacing exit signs in the school with low-energy LEDs, and determined that the lights were relatively efficient already. The team also did extensive research on options for installing a school wind turbine, and made a presentation to the school board. The team was unable to move ahead with the project in time available.

The **Milan Community** team raised public awareness and demonstrated better energy choices. The team worked to install CFLs in as many homes and businesses in Milan as possible, and worked with the Greater Milan Initiative on an energy appraisal and energy plan for the Milan School building. The team worked with the Milan City Council to follow through on commitments involved in the Mayor's Climate Initiative.

The **Montevideo** team used a grant to display solar-powered holiday lights in downtown Montevideo. Team members also created three short films to enter into the inaugural Green Carpet Film Festival and post on YouTube. The team supported alternative energies at a public hearing to, and researched energy audits for their community.

The **Morris** team approached the growing energy problem from different directions, with the goal of having an impact in their community. Education was included as the key to making real change. Their four main projects included: 1) a district-wide recycling program, with students collecting and sorting the materials on a surprise rotational basis, 2) a county-wide free electronic waste recycling day, 3) a shoreline restoration project for a local park, and 4) solar panels placed on their elementary school building, which is a project that the team will continue into next year.



The **New London-Spicer** team improved energy efficiency at New London's Little Theatre by installing CFLs, researching recycling options, and doing the research and background work involved in the installation of insulation using "green" materials. The team pursued grants to help pay for insulation. They also researched a wind turbine appropriate for use on the Little Theatre. Finally, they developed an educational program called BUG—Buy Local, Use less, and Go Green—for use with elementary-aged students in their district .

The **New Century Charter School** team increased community awareness of the benefits of composting, to divert compostable garbage from landfills. The team undertook school and community education via tours and presentations at Creekside Composting Facility. The team also planned and held an Earth Day event at their school, including a "black-out" of electrical use.

The **Paynesville** team implemented a recycling program in the high school and middle school, and worked to raise awareness. The team encouraged the local supermarket to get green bags. They also purchased meters to measure electricity use of individual appliances, and have the meters available for loan.

The **Willmar** team worked with consultants and many community partners to undertake the renovation of a greenhouse. The greenhouse is being developed as a functioning model site for year-round food production. The team explored many heating options for the greenhouse, insulated the facility, did significant renovation, and began raising greens for the school cafeteria. An experimental biomass burner and recycled solar thermal panels are in place to heat the greenhouse. Community partners will assist in furthering the project, along with different departments at Willmar High School.

YES Award Summary

Grand Prize Award (\$1000)	Morris
Community Engagement Award (\$500)	Willmar
Long-term Vision Award (\$500)	Willmar
Carbon Footprint Award (\$500)	Morris
Energy Conservation Award (\$500)	NLS
Economic Impact Award (\$500)
.....	New Century Charter School (Hutchinson)



Plans for the future: YES 2008-2009

YES has been a success and a learning process in its pilot year. Year 2 of YES will implement the comments and suggestions gathered from students and advisors involved with the program through an extensive evaluation process.

YES Kick-Off: Tuesday, September 23, 2008 at Prairie Woods ELC

- Teams and coaches will get together for a full day of team-building, education on energy issues and opportunities, and more.

YES Summit & Community Event: Monday, November 10, 2008

- Teams will gather for another opportunity to learn and connect to resources for their projects. Students and community members will also attend an evening event combining education and entertainment. (NOTE DATE CHANGE)

Winter Workshop: Wednesday, February 4, 2009

- Teams will attend a one-day workshop to share progress, gain resources, and engage in learning activities.

Earth Day Celebration and YES Culminating Event: Saturday, April 18, 2009

- Teams will join PWELC for their Earth Day celebration. Prizes will be awarded to teams for their energy action projects. Community members will be invited to celebrate and recognize the efforts of the youth.



YES Sponsors and Supporters

Major Support from:

Southwest Initiative Foundation

Award Support:

Southwest Initiative Foundation

Lake Region Bank

Kandiyohi Power Cooperative

Ottertail Power Company

Great River Energy

Partners and Supporters:

West Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnership

CURE (Clean Up the River Environment)

Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs)

Willmar Municipal Utilities

Kandiyohi Power Cooperative

Minnesota West Community & Technical College

Renville County Economic Development Partnership

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development



Prairie Country RC&D

Ridgewater College

Kandiyohi County

The Center for Small Towns

Buffalo Fish Fine Art Gallery, Willmar

Michael Monroe

Rural Renewable Energy Alliance

Earthrise Farm

Moonstone Farm

Fresh Energy

Green Lake Bible Camp

University of Minnesota-Morris / West Central

Research and Outreach Center



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