



GET ENERGIZED IOWA!

Where Communities Compete to Conserve

www.getenergizediowa.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE — WEDNESDAY, AUG. 27, 2014

CONTACTS: David Osterberg or Mike Owen, Iowa Policy Project, (319) 338-0773, ipp@lcom.net

Carole Yates, UNI Center for Energy and Environmental Education, (319) 273-7599, carole.yates@uni.edu

Wapsie Valley Honored for Energy-Saving Efforts

Solar Array Installed at High School — Prize for Get Energized Iowa! Competition

FAIRBANK, Iowa (Aug. 27, 2014) — When the lights go on for Wapsie Valley's opening football game Friday night, the spotlight will be on solar power and energy efficiency.

A new 2kW solar power array at the high school is the community's prize for winning the Get Energized, Iowa! competition involving four towns in Northeast Iowa. Fairbank and Readlyn, teaming up as Wapsie Valley, competed with Dike and Hudson throughout 2012 to see which could reduce residential energy use the most.

"Energy efficiency and renewable energy go hand in hand," said Carole Yates, program manager for the Center for Energy and Environmental Education (CEEE) at the University of Northern Iowa. "Many community volunteers worked very hard to make this happen."

Wapsie Valley Superintendent Chad Garber and Get Energized! organizers will recognize participants and supporters of the energy reduction competition in a ceremony at halftime of the home football game Friday vs. Starmont.

"The project is a great example of the power in community collaboration at Wapsie Valley. We're excited about the potential for some energy savings, but we're even more excited about exposing our students to the science of energy in a very practical, hands-on way. The solar array represents a real-time laboratory for our staff and students," Garber said.

Principal organizers of the project included CEEE, the Iowa Policy Project, the Butler County REC, Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities and Green Iowa AmeriCorps, as well as municipal utilities and community groups in each town.

Financial supporters included the Fred and Charlotte Hubbell Foundation and the Cole-Belin Education Foundation, the Iowa Energy Center and the Iowa Power Fund. Volunteer work from John Steil and Midwest Energy Solutions got the array installed in time for the start of the school year. Steil's children have been students at the school.

"The small towns in this area proved that local volunteers talking to their neighbors could lead citizens to become more conscious of how they use electricity," said David Osterberg, co-founder of the Iowa Policy Project. "Hudson, Dike, Readlyn and Fairbank all reduced electric use during the competition. All are winners."

Craig Codner at Butler County REC saw the educational value of the project.

“Butler County REC was part of this competition from the beginning. We were happy to put our staff time and our donation behind this solar electric system,” Codner said. “We hope the panels that generate power will also teach students about how electricity can be generated.”

#

***For more information about Get Energized, Iowa! see the competition website at
<http://www.getenergizediowa.org>***