

November 3, 2005

3rd annual Governor's High School Conference on the Environment focuses on energy

"Planetwalker" John Francis keynote speaker

"Power Up Wisconsin: Charging Ahead to an Energy Efficient Future," is the theme of this year's 2005 Governor's High School Conference on the Environment at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP).

John Francis, goodwill ambassador to the World's Grassroots Communities for the United Nation's Environment Program, is the featured keynote speaker. Francis' story is compelling as in 1971 he gave up using all motorized vehicles after he witnessed an oil spill in San Francisco Bay. He has since walked and/or sailed around the world. For 22 years he never rode in a motorized vehicle, and for 17 of those years he did not speak a word. He ultimately received various degrees, including a doctorate in land resources from UW-Madison. His 2004 book, "Planetwalker: How to Change Your World One Step at a Time," chronicles his journey.

Jessica Doyle, the first lady of Wisconsin and an experienced educator, has also been invited to address the conference.

Sponsored by the Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education (WCEE) located at the UWSP College of Natural Resources (CNR), the conference is slated for Wednesday, November 9, with all sessions being held at UWSP's University Center. Wisconsin students and teachers, grades 9-12, will learn about the second law of thermodynamics, the electric power industry, natural gas as an energy source, myths about energy, energy conservation and more. Other topics will include learning about the carbon cycle, energy consumption throughout the world, the debate over the Arrowhead-Weston transmission line, energy from farms and landfills, energy efficiency and renewables, politics and energy, solar power, wind energy, energy conservation in schools and at home and more.

According to conference co-coordinator, Anne Hylla, the purpose of the conference is to share information on current energy issues while offering a forum where students and teachers alike can better understand one of the most pressing issues facing Wisconsin and the nation. Each high school is invited to send up to eight students, all of whom are asked to bring poster presentations to share with conference participants.

"Our objective is not only to inform the students but to help each student find her/his leadership potential while fostering interest in the environment and energy issues," said Hylla. "Energy is not only an issue for today but for the foreseeable future and it is imperative that we give our young people the necessary tools and knowledge to tackle these complex issues in the coming years."

UWSP faculty and staff taking part in the conference include Nick Hylla, Ken Menningen, John Coletta, Jennie Lanes, Jeremy Solin, Sara Windjue, Carrie Bea Ziolkowski and Marjorie Rychlock. Other guest presenters include representatives from UW-Green Bay, the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute,

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Lakeshore Technical College, Bayfield High School, Midwest Renewable Energy Association, Public Service Commission of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Public Power, Inc., Save Our Unique Lands, The Conserve School, The American Transmission Company, Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corporation, Mark Motors Toyota and Excel Energy.

Conference sponsors beyond WCEE include UWSP's College of Natural Resources, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, KEEP (Wisconsin K-12 Energy Education Program), Midwest Renewable Energy Association, Focus on Energy, Alliant Energy Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, Madison Gas & Electric, We Energies and Wisconsin Public Service.

Schools taking part in the conference include:

Argyle High School
Barron High School
Bayfield High School
Clara Mohammed High School
Conserve School
Darlington High School
DePere High School
Fond du Lac High School
Fort Atkinson High School
Gillette High School
Indian Trail High School
Kiel High School
Lincoln High School
Loyal High School
Luck High School
Marinette High School
Milwaukee School of Languages
New Berlin Eisenhower High School
New Berlin West High School
Oneida High School
Pewaukee High School
Richland Center High School
Riverside University High School
Sheboygan North High School
St. Catherine's High School
St. John's N.W. Military Academy
Tomahawk High School
Waupaca High School
West Allis High School

For more information please reference the conference's Web site at www.uwsp.edu/cnr/wcee/youthconference/index.htm or call (715) 346-3604.