

State of the Year – Ohio

The 2007-2008 year, like previous years, has been an excellent year for Ohio Energy Project (OEP) programs across the state. The expertise and enthusiasm of OEP's teacher advisors and teacher partners provides the organization with a solid foundation of empowering students to be energy-education leaders. Enthusiastic student leadership teams implemented OEP's "Kids Teaching Kids" philosophy and facilitated Energy Workshops, Energy Fairs and Customized District Programs. Additionally, teacher workshops on hydrogen fuel cell technology, nuclear science, energy efficiency and the sources of energy continue to impact hundreds of teachers and thousands of students. This year alone, of those schools that reported their numbers, 442,162 Ohioans have been reached through Ohio Energy Project.

The Ohio EPA/Ohio Environmental Education Fund has recently awarded OEP a grant to pilot a new energy efficiency program. Teachers will be empowered through professional development to educate their students about the importance energy efficiency and 1,000 students will receive kits of equipment to make their homes more efficient. Additionally, Duke Energy has renewed its sponsorship of OEP and will be supporting new programs in southwest Ohio.

Recently, OEP has been busy knocking on the doors of leadership in the Ohio House and Senate as well as with key state and federal government staff members - discussing the importance of energy education as policies concerning climate change, electric re-regulation, and energy policy legislation are considered. Becky Grimm testified before the House Public Utilities Committee on January 30 of this year to discuss the important work of OEP, and of the need for continued funding. Energy education is critical to fulfilling the mission of "empowering students to be educated leaders of an energy responsible society". We will continue the dialogue with our elected and appointed officials to keep OEP and energy education at the forefront of energy policy.

At the end of each energetic school year, OEP looks forward to hosting the Youth Energy Celebration, a statewide recognition program of the Ohio Energy Project (OEP) for students, teachers and schools involved in energy education. On May 14, 2008, the event drew more than 440 students, teachers and parents from 29 schools to the Fawcett Center at The Ohio State University where OEP recognized outstanding energy education programs during the 2007-08 school year.