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Regional News

July 20, 2006

Orangeville builds on Shelburne's 'Reduce the Juice' success

By LAVINIA KERR Staff Reporter

Orangeville-area university and high school students have launched a 'Reduce the Juice (RTJ) Project' modelled on a highly successful one in Shelburne last year.

The students have begun a door-to-door campaign to encourage Orangeville residents to lower their electricity consumption by five per cent this summer.

The determined group of 15 young people who introduced themselves to the public on Wednesday at Orangeville Hydro office on C Line challenged residents to reach the conservation goal.

The Orangeville RTJ project has some large shoes to fill. Premiering in Shelburne last year, the students proved that the goal of a 5 per cent reduction was possible.

"The Reduce The Juice team and the residents in Shelburne need to be congratulated in proving this project can work," said Orangeville Mayor Drew Brown. "But their success can be our challenge to meet the 5 per cent or beat it."

Also present for the launch was Peter Love, chief energy conservation officer with the

Conservation Bureau, a division of the Ontario Power Authority. He said he had cited the success Reduce The Juice experienced in Shelburne in a report he produced called the Conservation Challenge, saying it proved that grassroots movements can make a difference. He also spoke about the success of another conservation project he was involved in - the three R's of recycling (reduce, reuse and recycle).

"Students helped to make that program successful, by taking what they had learned in school and bringing it home and its their persistence that got recycling where it is today. I know students can do the same thing for energy conservation."

So successful was the team, it caught the attention of Dr. David Suzuki when RTJ was recognized during his recent book tour stop in Orangeville.

The team is wasting no time getting started, having already visited over 900 homes in Orangeville before the public launch.

"This is a perfect time to meet the public and the press," said Sarah Fairlie one of the Reduce the Juice (RTJ) university team leaders. "We have only been on the streets for a week but already people are recognizing us at their doors and are very willing to take the pledge to reduce."

The RTJ team used the public forum to explain their door-to-door campaign, letting people know when to expect them in their neighbourhood and how to contact them at the Farmer's Market and other community events.

Planned goals for RTJ Orangeville include a visit to at least 5,000 homes and getting to speak to 1,500 individuals about energy conservation.

The 12 high school student members of the RTJ team live in Orangeville and the three university team leaders are past graduates of local high schools. All have been trained in energy conservation techniques and are able to help residents reduce their power consumption in a number of ways.

"Some people decide to change to compact fluorescent bulbs, others decide to use a set-back thermostat - there are lots of easy ways to be more energy efficient," said Pheobe Lusk, an RTJ

team leader and fourth-year student at the University of Guelph. "But everybody is interested for at least two reasons. They want to save money and they want to help stop air pollution."

The students offered tours of a renewable energy trailer built by students

at Orangeville District Secondary School with the support of RTJ and Orangeville Hydro. The trailer is designed to show residents how they can generate their own power using renewable energy.

"The first thing people ask us when they see the trailer is how they can get solar panels or a wind turbine on their house," said Jamie Barclay, a member of the RTJ team who volunteered to "specialize" in the trailer. "We tell them solar may be cool, but conservation is a lot faster and cheaper. Those panels don't come cheap!"

RTJ team leader Sara Wicks, a second-year student in International Development, believes energy conservation at the community level offers people the opportunity to think globally and act locally.

"When young people from your community ask you to do the right thing and show you how to do it, people definitely respond," she said.

The Reduce the Juice website is [www. reducethejuice.ca](http://www.reducethejuice.ca) .

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Local News

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REDUCE THE JUICE (RTJ) demonstrates to Orangeville Mayor Drew Brown

and Deputy Mayor Jim MacGregor a snow-cone machine that runs on solar power. RTJ is a team of students working on an energy conservation project in Orangeville this summer.



Photo/LAVINIA KERR