

# Energy Office, LES & LPS launch program to reduce energy use

Some elementary school students could help their parents save more than \$125 a year in energy and water use thanks to a program announced Tuesday by the Nebraska Energy Office, Lincoln Electric System and Lincoln Public Schools.

Called the Energy Detective Program, public, parochial and home schools in LES' service area that choose to participate will provide each fourth or fifth grader a kit at no charge containing energy efficient products, said Director of the Nebraska Energy Office Ginger Willson.

Costs for the kit and program are shared equally by LES and from federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds received by NEO.

Each school district determines whether fourth or fifth graders will receive the program. Lincoln Public Schools will use the program with fifth grade students.

"Students and their families will gain practical knowledge on environmental issues and can use the tools to increase energy and water efficiency at home, while decreasing monthly utility bills," she said.

The kit includes two compact fluorescent light bulbs, a kitchen faucet aerator, and a furnace filter attachment that whistles when it needs to be changed. The program also provides a curriculum for students dealing with energy conservation, the history of energy generation and renewable and non-renewable resources.

"In addition to LES, 78 utilities across the state have joined this educational partnership. As of Friday, more than 8,300 student kits have been ordered by teachers," Willson said.

LES Administrator and CEO Kevin Wailes said a school-education program was budgeted for 2010 to help educate fu-

ture customers about energy conservation.

"We were considering the Energy Detective Program when it was offered by the Nebraska Energy Office," he said. "We saw positive results in other communities from the program and jumped at the chance to take part."

Students report back how many of the energy conservation measures are used in their home, and the total impact is then computed, he said. Families also become more aware of energy-related issues.

"These are easy-to-install, low-cost measures that have proven impact on lowering energy bills," he said. "In addition, they help LES and all customers by lowering overall electricity use."

"Lower demand for electricity helps us to delay the construction of power plants, which has the most significant impact on rates."

LPS Superintendent Dr. Steve Joel praised the Energy Detective Program, and said, "LPS is committed to energy education and conservation and are most appreciative of this collaborative partnership with LES."

Lincoln elementary schools were offered the program at no charge, and to-date 21 schools representing 1,100 students are participating in LES' service area, Willson said.

Dan Van Bibber, Prescott Elementary fifth-grade teacher, who has started the program in his classroom said, "The materials and curriculum in the Energy Detective Program are very motivating and relevant to our students."

Schools wanting to participate in the program may contact Jerry Loos in the Energy Office at 402-471-3356 or [jerry.loos@nebraska.gov](mailto:jerry.loos@nebraska.gov).