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March 5, 2008

Project encourages energy-efficiency

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Anne Beaty
 Echo Editor
 Wednesday March 05, 2008

Airdrie Echo — Airdrie's Junior Forest Wardens spent Saturday lighting up the community, thanks to Project Porchlight, an initiative designed to encourage use of compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs.

Working with Alberta Junior Forest Warden Associations (AJFWA) in 18 communities across Alberta, Project Porchlight provided 500,000 free CFL bulbs to residents through a door-to-door campaign.

The collaboration between Project Porchlight and Junior Forest Wardens seemed a natural. "Junior Forest Wardens are good stewards, with a great appreciation of the environment and natural resources and we are proud to help carry the message of Project Porchlight to Alberta residents," AJFWA president Al Wardale said in a press release.

The project — which had a pilot run in Ontario in 2005 and began a full-fledged national campaign in 2007 under the auspices of the non-profit One Change organization — is designed to get Canadians to adopt energy-smart behaviours one step at a time. The concept seems to have struck the right note with Canadians.



LIGHTING THE WAY: Brandan (back) and Noah Paas work to find out how much energy it takes to light a regular incandescent bulb, during Project Porchlight's bulb blitz launch at Towerlane Mall Saturday morning.

Covy Moore photo

"We've been very well received by Canadians and groups within the communities," said Tom Jeza, One Change administrative assistant.

While some have had questions about the efficiency of CFL bulbs and their use of mercury, Jeza said, most of the Canadian public has been supportive of the idea of replacing inefficient incandescent bulbs with the CFL bulbs, which, according to Project Porchlight, last eight times longer and are 75 per cent more energy-efficient.

"The response by the public ... 99 per cent of the time is positive," Jeza said.

One Change was created after the success of the initial Project Porchlight pilot, as organizers did not want to limit themselves to one project when it comes to environmental awareness and sustainability.

"We felt that ... opportunities for promoting sustainability were significant," Jeza said. With that in mind, such programs as Project Porchlight can reach Canadians in small ways that have big impacts.

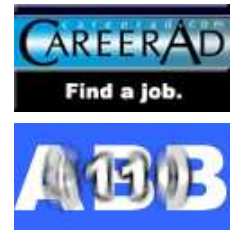
"We all know that we have to make environmentally sustainable choices and the light bulb is a great place to start," One Change executive director Stuart Hickox said in a press release. "Once people change a bulb, they become part of the solution and want to do more. The Alberta project was strongly supported by corporate sponsors, including Encana Corporation.

For more information on the program, visit: www.projectporchlight.com

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