Governor Pat Quinn declared October 13th to 19th as Careers in Energy Week in Illinois. During that week, teachers across the state are encouraged to share resources about energy careers with their students, and energy industry representatives are invited to present to schools. The purpose is to highlight the need for a strong and growing energy workforce in the state. The photos were taken at Urbana Middle School during last year's event.

The Energy Learning Exchange (ELE) is a member of the Illinois Energy Workforce Consortium (IEWC) that is working with schools, companies, and organizations as part of the Center for Energy Workforce Development’s (CEWD) nationwide effort to highlight careers in energy. ELE assisted IEWC in reaching high school principals across the state with information about the week-long event by assembling almost 1,000 packets for mailing, including a Careers in Energy Week event poster, a careers information booklet, and an “Are You Ready to Get Into Energy?” flyer.

The ELE also mailed Careers in Energy Week School Kits to nearly 300 middle and high school teachers that had participated in energy education workshops through Illinois State University. Kits included Careers in Energy Week posters, a flyer, a t-shirt for the teacher, pencils and pencil sharpeners for their students, and a Get Into Energy notebook. In a memo and email, teachers were encouraged to visit www.Energy.IllinoisState.edu/careers/to access resources for use in their classrooms, including energy careers data, presentation files, videos, and curriculum links. On the website, they could also request a speaker on an energy topic of their choice to present to their classrooms. ELE members will be contacted to help fill those special speaker requests again this year. Informational emails were also forwarded through Illinois Pathways and other organizations to encourage teachers to visit the ELE website to utilize resources, order a kit, and schedule a speaker.

Energy companies and organizations are invited to speak to middle and high school students about career options, host open houses, or coordinate energy demonstrations in their local communities. Those planning to participate should email jmniezg@ilstu.edu with their event information to have their details included on the ELE’s Careers in Energy Week website.

Classroom Training Explains Energy Concepts for Students and Teachers

Dr. David Loomis, Matt Aldeman, and Jeritt Williams visited the Lorenzo R. Smith Sustainability and Technology Academy at Pembroke Community Consolidated School District #259 to present on energy to 130 students, in 4th to 8th grades. Student challenges were also facilitated relating to the harnessing and conversion of energy, power transmission, and careers in energy.

More than a dozen teachers, from several disciplines for 2nd through 8th grade, also attended a half-day professional development workshop that included STEM breakout sessions. The hands-on session hosted by Matt included building a model anemometer, exploring technical applications and applying mathematical reasoning. Jerit's session focused on standards-based curriculum resources, adapting inquiry and analytical tools across subject areas and grade levels, and understanding the pathway to an energy career. The teachers also received the Careers in Energy Week School Kits. Plans are being made to further enrich the energy curriculum and the after school programs at the school.
Energy Learning Exchange Welcomes Jeritt Williams

Jeritt Williams assists in the implementation of the Energy Learning Exchange, delivers professional development for teachers, and provides public and educational outreach. He has seven years of experience teaching Middle and High School Technology Engineering. Jeritt earned his B.S. in Technology Education at Illinois State University in 2007 and M.S. in Training and Development in 2012.

New Illinois Learning Standards for Science Conference

Teachers from across the state attended Teachers in the Lead: New Illinois Learning Standards for Science Conference coordinated by the Energy Learning Exchange and the Center for Mathematics, Science, and Technology. The conference served as a culminating experience for teachers involved in Next Generation Science Standards professional development workshops during the last two years, a program also coordinated by the team and funded by the Illinois State Board of Education and the U.S. Department of Education. Keynote speakers at the conference were Dr. Lee Shumow from Northern Illinois University, a Presidential Teaching Professor in Educational Psychology, and Dr. Brian Reiser from Northwestern University, a Professor in Learning Sciences. Breakout sessions featured teachers sharing curriculum that they had developed in the workshops.

Smart Grid for Schools Education Continues Around State

The Energy Learning Exchange and Center for Mathematics, Science, and Technology designed and implemented a Smart Grid for Schools program, offering schools the opportunity to learn about the new Smart Grid technology being rolled out by the utility companies in the state. The program is designed to engage K-12 students with Smart Grid in a fun, hands-on way, while incorporating Next Generation Science Standards.

Several professional development training sessions were coordinated for teachers to become Certified Smart Grid Educators. The sessions included instruction on implementing Smart Grid lesson plans and curriculum. Interactive, hands-on exhibits are now visiting Illinois schools for optimal student learning. Exhibits include a tabletop model of an electric grid with smart grid functionality, as well as life-sized models of rooms in a house (a bedroom and bathroom, a utility room, and a kitchen and dining room model) to explain how smart grid works and its benefits.