

Aiming for Greener Schools

ENVIRONMENT: Forum was a first for Sarnia

By TYLER KULA, THE OBSERVER



TYLER KULA tkula@theobserver.ca — LCCVI student Duncan MacSorley looks over anti idling information at a Lambton Kent District School Board environmental forum for high school students at Lambton College. MacSorley, 17, was one of 56 students attending the forum on Friday to learn about reducing local carbon footprints.-

Local public schools have taken a step toward catching up to their provincial counterparts in environmental education.

Students from 11 of the Lambton Kent District School Board's 13 high schools attended a forum Friday at the Lambton Inn, designed to boost environmental awareness, improve schools and better understand emerging green jobs.

"I'm hoping that (students) go back to their schools and look around, after today, and say, 'You know what, we could be doing this better,'" said John Ferguson, program consultant with the board.

Following a presentation by TransAlta's Peter Smith on reducing carbon footprints, Devin Mitchell, a Grade 12 student at St. Clair secondary, said she hopes to inspire

her classmates and their families to reduce vehicle idling.

Idling for longer than 10 seconds produces more CO₂ than turning off and restarting the vehicle, Smith said.

He also described Canada as the highest per capita emitter of carbon dioxide — ahead of the United States — and offered tips on home insulation, updating old appliances and car maintenance.

The school board forum — the first of its kind in Sarnia — was funded with a \$5,000 grant from the Ministry of Education.

Ferguson said he hopes local schools can become Ontario EcoSchools, which include environmental education for students in kindergarten through Grade 12.

Participants also receive Education and Environment ministry funding to improve building operations through school eco teams.

About 70% of Ontario's 2.5 million students attend EcoSchools, but there are none in the Lambton Kent district.

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