

J.D. Patton Area Technology Center recipient of \$10,000 Duke Energy Foundation Grant



Photo by Teresa Wilkins
Kenton County Schools

Photo (left to right): The Kenton County E=Wide2 mascot (Education Creates Wisdom in Saving Energy and the Environment), Ray Stanley, J. D. Patton Area Technology Center principal; Rhonda Whitaker, Duke Energy; Tom Pitts, electronic technology instructor; and Pat Goetz, guidance counselor.

Kentucky Tech - J.D. Patton ATC electrical technology instructor Tom Pitts has experienced a sense of renewed energy - both figuratively and realistically as a result of a recent \$10,000 Duke Energy Foundation grant - the second in two years from the energy giant. The check was awarded by Rhonda R. Whitaker, Duke Energy Kentucky Government and Community Relations director during the Kenton County Board of Education meeting on December 14, 2009. According to Pitts, the money will be used to expand the alternative energy program and help the school become more energy efficient. (The first grant, \$7,500, was awarded to help Pitts' solar and wind initiatives and to begin an articulation pathway with Cincinnati State.)



Rhonda
Whitaker

“Duke Energy appreciates the opportunity to support J.D. Patton’s new renewable energy education program,” said Whitaker. “The Kenton County School district continues to lead by example in the areas of energy efficiency and renewable energy through its new schools and academic programs.”

Initially Jim Lefeld, renewable energy director for Duke, met Pitts while visiting Patton's renewable energy sources student showcase display during the May 2008 Turkey Foot Middle School ground breaking event. Lefeld was impressed with what the students were doing. Pitts saw this as an opportunity to ask for advice and the "renewable" partnership emerged.

"It has been such a pleasure working with a company like Duke Energy," said Pitts. "Not only are they energy conscious, but they have also been instrumental in helping teachers throughout the school district teach renewable energy with both time and money. Jim Lefeld has been active in helping us secure Foundation funding, he has been to my classroom on several occasions and keeps in touch with me on a regular basis. This is the epitome of a successful business and industry relationship. I just can't say enough about how he has supported our efforts. The impact on students has been priceless."



Tom
Pitts



Wind Turbine
Generator on
grounds of
J.D. Patton
ATC

Over the 2008-09 school year, Pitts had his student involved in wind and solar generation projects. The wind turbine generator (shown above) was constructed on site and actually helps power the ATC's electrical technology lab and vending machines.

"This is a great way for our students to apply what they have learned in a real setting," says Pitts.



Ray Stanley
J.D. Patton Area Technology Center principal:

“This grant shows Duke Energy's commitment to Patton’s continuing efforts in providing cutting edge instruction for the 'green jobs' of tomorrow. We applaud Duke Energy and the Kenton County School District’s support of our initiatives. We will work to strengthen our partnerships in the coming years. Duke Energy saw our needs and responded.

“I want to personally give credit to Tom Pitts for his vision of how students can use the skills they learn in the electrical technology program and its application and relevance in the renewable energy sector. Mr. Pitts has great insight for where he believes his program can be. Additionally, his commitment to students, J.D. Patton and the Kentucky Tech system is an outstanding example of who we are and what we do. While his efforts have gone above and beyond those of a typical classroom teacher, he has successfully incorporated a host of other programs into this project - most notably heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC); welding and carpentry.

"In this day and age, renewable energy and energy conservation are a critical part of our environment and continued existence."

Tim Hanner

Kenton County Schools superintendent:

"Duke Energy is a valued partner in providing real world opportunities to students. Through the generous sponsorship of Duke, J. D. Patton Area Technology Center is able to expand its Alternative Energy and Electro-Mechanical Engineering programs to give students a competitive edge for high demand, high wage careers.

"Additional innovative career pathways include the partnership with Gateway Community College and Cincinnati State allowing students to earn college credits while still in high school. For instance, we have students taking mechatronics at Gateway and alternative energy classes through Cincinnati State. We see this as another way J.D. Patton is leading the way in postsecondary opportunities for students in our region."



Good News Flash #306

By: Fran Dundon

Office of Career and Technical Education
Education and Workforce Development Cabinet

January 21, 2010

