

FIRST ENVIRONMENTAL SUMMIT ATTENDED BY 200

Kent eyes resources

BY LYNN MELLIS WORTHINGTON

REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

KENT — About 200 people attended the town's first Environmental Summit, which brought together homeowners, contractors, legislators and experts in energy, transportation, waste and recycling, food and agriculture and land and water use.

"Live better with less," urged Michael Green, a science teacher at Kent School and a proponent of finding alternative energy sources, during opening remarks Saturday. "Water and oil and the nutrients civilizations are built on. We take fresh water for granted and it is more precious than gold."

The Kent Energy and Environmental Task Force, the Housatonic Valley Association, Kent Memorial Library and the Kent Land Trust hosted the event.

"As never before citizens can make a difference," said Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, one of the first speakers. "We're also on the cusp of a crucial time on global warming — are we going to act or not? Or let forces of destruction act on us? We have the opportunity to lead the world."

Forty-two vendors attended, and attendees chose between 11 sessions offered at three different times.

"What's Working and What's Coming" filled the school's library with people interested in talking about various types of energy, such as wind turbines, micro hydroelectric, solar power and nuclear power. Walter Kane, a nuclear physicist and science teacher at Marvelwood School, stirred discussion among the audience when he shared his views that with 30 years of history and 103 reactors in the nation, nuclear power is a viable and safe power source. The two major accidents, Three Mile Island and Chernobyl, he said, were the result of a lot of mistakes.

Ian Hochstetter, a custom builder with Hammersmith, Inc., shared innovations coming in the energy realm. He cited "pico hydroelectric power" as one that he believes will take off in Northwest Connecticut, making use of backyard streams to generate power.

"This is what we hoped for," said organizer Karren J. Garrity, a selectman and chairman of the energy task force.

PHOTOS BY LYNN MELLIS WORTHINGTON REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

Kent resident Dr. Walter Kane, right, asks a question of U.S. Rep. Christopher Murphy, D-5th District, standing at left, during lunch at the Environmental Summit on Saturday at Kent Center School.

Kent resident John Casey, right, talks with John Mazur of Green Star Energy Solutions about an energy audit.
