

# City/Region

*"I learned you use a lot of energy with the non-fluorescent light bulbs."*

— HOUSTON LOWE, 11, AWBREY PARK STUDENT, ON "PROJECT ILLUMINATE"



BRIAN DAVIES / The Register-

**Coeylen Barry**, a UO graduate student, talks about the energy benefits of fluorescent light bulbs during her presentation Friday morning at Awbrey Park Elementary School. Barry and her adviser designed "Project Illuminate" to educate schoolchildren about efficient energy use.

## Enlightening the children

## *A project by students in the UO's Environmental Leadership program seeks to inform kids about energy conservation*

**BY ANNE WILLIAMS**

*The Register-Guard*

In the opinion of 11-year-old Tyler Alger, SeSequential Biofuels was the hands-down winner.

With its thermal walls, planted rooftop, recycled shelves, 100 percent renewable energy sources and employee incentives for pedaling to work, who could argue that the McVay Highway filling station was the greenest of them all?

"I thought they did the most," said Tyler, who had never heard of biofuels before this week.

But a majority of his Awbrey Park Elementary School classmates — albeit a small one — found the new Willamette Street Market of Choice even more impressive, with its abundant natural light, rooftop compost system, energy-efficient ap-

pliances and bounty of locally grown, organic produce.

"It was kind of a hard choice," said 10-year-old Kylie Pierson, who went with the supermarket.

Friday's vote for the top "Energy Pioneer" among four local businesses was the capstone to a weeklong lesson on energy conservation, delivered by four University of Oregon students in the Environmental Leadership program.

Designed by graduate student Coeylen Barry and her adviser, program co-coordinator Steve Mital, the curriculum included demonstrations on biofuels and other forms of alternative energy; creation of bar graphs and pie charts; an art project in which students created their own "pollution monsters" and "energy

*Please turn to **ILLUMINATE**, Page D3*



**Houston Lowe, 11**, listens closely along with his classmates before voting for his favorite "green" business.

# Illuminate: SeQuential leads vote count

Continued from Page D1

superheroes"; and an energy journal in which students tracked their own energy habits at home.

The UO students spent an hour each day in classrooms, and on Friday gave PowerPoint presentations on the four firms.

Barry and undergraduates Comet Pangrac, Aaron Sidder and Angie Duncan have taken "Project Illuminate" to six fifth-grade classrooms at five Eugene School District elementary schools since February; next week, they'll do their last lesson at Willagillespie Elementary.

The fifth-graders at Awbrey Park said they've learned a lot about conserving energy in the past week. Several said they're more inclined to turn off lights, walk or ride bicycles to school and ask for paper, not plastic, grocery bags.

"We take five-minute showers, not 30- or 45-minute showers," said Robbie Kelly, 11.

"I learned you use a lot of energy with the non-fluorescent light bulbs," said Houston Lowe, also 11.

Tyler, who drew "King Barf," an energy superhero who vomits on people who don't recycle, said when he grows up he'll try to live in a house with lots of windows to let in light.

Teacher Dodie Kauffman encouraged the students to be keen observers of the energy practices of other businesses and reward "good citizens" with their patronage.

The other businesses in the running for the Fifth Grade Energy Pioneer for a Cleaner Future Award were Rexus and The Good Company, a research and consulting firm that works on sustainability issues. While

Rexus got no votes from Kauffman's students, The Good Company garnered one. Market of Choice pulled in 14, SeQuential 11.

Mital sought advice from local experts and came up with an initial list of 12 local businesses with stellar energy management practices. The students winnow down the list to four, which they then researched.

While Kauffman's class favored Market of Choice, SeQuential is leading the overall vote count so far, he said, and seems a shoe-in for the Energy Pioneer medallion.

"They're all good businesses, and we're trying to promote them all," Mital said.

Project Illuminate was funded in part through a \$6,200 grant from the Eugene Water & Electric Board's Partners in Education program. Another \$6,000 came from Bob Miller, a UO alumnus who established the Catherine and Robert Miller Charitable Family Foundation.

EWEB initially rejected the grant request, but Mital and Barry resubmitted it after they hit on the idea of having kids assess business energy practices.

"Everyone immediately agreed that was a great way to tie it all together," he said.

Mital said he hopes to repeat the project each year, and believes there's a demand. His team had more requests from teachers than it could fulfill.

John Femal, EWEB's community education coordinator, said there's been a recent explosion in interest in conservation education, perhaps thanks to the greater awareness of global warning spawned by former Vice President Al Gore's documentary, "An Inconvenient

Truth."

"Things have changed remarkably in the last nine months," he said.

Kauffman said she'd sign up for the presentations again if she could make it work with her class schedule. The lessons were packed with important information and offered a nice break from the norm, she said.

"(My students) do paper and plastic bag recycling, so all of this kind of comes together in the big picture when they see these college students talking about it like it's important to them," she said. "I really think that a guest speaker always makes a bigger impression, and it wouldn't stick nearly as long unless I say it three times."