



MEDIA RELEASE

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Kawerau students get a taste of the electricity supply industry

Kawerau College students Carl Edmonson and Barry Baker are learning what it's like to work in the electricity supply industry. The third annual two-week electricity supply 'taster course' is being held at Kawerau College during the school holidays, and ten young men from across the Eastern Bay are taking part.

Organised by the Eastern Bay Energy Trust (EBET) and the Electricity Supply Industry Training Organisation (ESITO), in conjunction with Kawerau College, the course is co-funded by ESITO and EBET, to give interested young people an insight into career opportunities, and to encourage new entrants into the electricity supply industry.

This is the only course of this type in New Zealand, where trainees participate full-time for two weeks, in a live-in situation, staying on the school's marae, and taking part in a variety of team dynamics and motivation exercises as well as the full daytime learning programme.

The course was designed for 16 to 21 year olds who are considering a career in the electricity supply or electrical sectors. Tutors from WINTEC will introduce the trainees to a wide number of work relevant areas and activities. These include the fundamentals of electricity, workshop practices including the use of power tools and machining equipment, and workplace communication.

Last week the trainees made an overnight trip to Hamilton, visiting power stations at Arapuni, Karapiro and Huntly, as well as Mighty River Power. While in Hamilton the trainees spent time at WINTEC where they toured the workshops and met students in the industry.

This week the trainees will spend a day working at heights, including learning how to carry out pole-top rescues. A visit to energy efficiency company Energy Options is on the programme, followed by a visit to view the control rooms at Horizon Energy Distribution Limited and Bay of Plenty Electricity. The students will also visit the Aniwhenua power station and the energy centre at the Norske Skog mill, and will check on progress at Mighty River Power's geothermal power station at Kawerau.

The trainees, all year 12 and 13 students, are excited about this opportunity to experience a taste of working life in the electricity supply industry, and to look at career opportunities within the industry.

Eastern Bay Energy Trust deputy chairman and Kawerau Trustee Brian Ponting said 'There is a serious shortage of young people coming into the electricity supply industry, and so the Trustees have made a commitment to industry education and training. This includes scholarships and apprenticeships, and now we are taking the programme a step further by going into the schools to show senior students that this is an exciting industry, with a wide range of career opportunities. This taster course is an ideal way to give young people an overview of the industry, and to encourage them to make definite plans for their future'.

The course ends on Friday 5th October with a luncheon, when trainees will make a presentation about the electricity supply industry, to invited guests and industry representatives.

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