



MEDIA RELEASE

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Electricity supply 'taster course' on again at Kawerau

Ten young Eastern Bay men are learning what it's like to work in the electricity supply industry during the second annual two-week 'taster course' being held at Kawerau College during the school holidays.

Following last year's successful pilot programme, interest was high, with applicants being required to participate in interviews and provide evidence of their interest in the industry, to secure one of the ten sought-after positions on the course.

Organised by the Electricity Supply Industry Training Organisation (ESITO), in conjunction with Kawerau College and the Eastern Bay Energy Trust (EBET), 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 in Hamilton and Utilitech in Auckland 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.

A highlight of the course will be an overnight trip to Hamilton, with the trainees visiting power stations at Arapuni, Karapiro and Huntly, as well as Mighty River Power. While in Hamilton the trainees will spend time at WINTEC where they will tour the workshops and meet students in the industry.

Next week the trainees will spend a day working at heights, including learning how to carry out pole-top rescues. A trip to view the control rooms at Horizon Energy Distribution Limited and Bay of Plenty Electricity is also on the programme, followed by a visit to the energy centre at the Norske Skog mill.

The trainees, all year 12 and 13 students, include four from Kawerau College, four from Trident High School and two from Whakatane High School. All 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 6th 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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