



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Electricity supply 'taster course' a first for New Zealand

School's out, but ten young Eastern Bay men are learning what it's like to work in the electricity supply industry during a two-week 'taster course' being held at Kawerau College during the school holidays.

The taster course is being run by the Electricity Supply Industry Training Organisation (ESITO), in conjunction with Kawerau College and the Eastern Bay Energy Trust (EBET), and is being co-funded by ESITO and EBET.

Usually held in Hamilton or Auckland over four weeks, the course has been specially modified for the Eastern Bay, making it compact and totally hands-on.

For the first time in New Zealand, trainees are participating 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, and 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 the Arapuni, Karapiro and Huntly power stations, 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 two days 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.

The daytime programme is being delivered by WINTEC tutor Kevin White and others who are brought in for various aspects of the course. The after-hours and weekend activities are being delivered by the head of the college's tertiary faculty Glen Fowler, ably supported by a team of people from the college who are assisting with cooking and overnight supervision duties.

The trainees include five from Kawerau, three from Whakatane, and one each from Opotiki and Edgecumbe. 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 'The Trustees are committed to introducing young people to the electricity supply industry through the Trust's industry training programme, which includes scholarships and apprenticeships in energy-related fields. This taster course is an ideal way to give young people an overview of the industry, and will hopefully encourage them to make some definite plans for their futures'.

The course ends on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> October with a luncheon, when trainees will make a presentation about the electricity supply industry, to invited guests and industry representatives.

***For further information contact:***

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