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BPA Engineers Light Up Scappoose Classroom

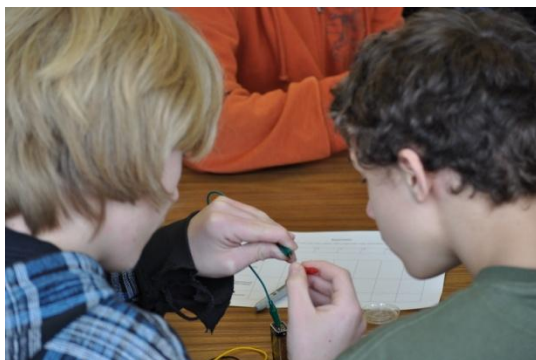
“Which is a better conductor of electricity – a piece of plastic or the human body?” Scappoose Middle School students got to test different conductors and insulators of electricity during a visit by two engineers from the Bonneville Power Administration, including an impressive display of how electricity can travel through an entire classroom of students!



As part of National Engineers Month, engineers Kellie Robinson and Ron Denis visited Ms. Marian Hanson’s Pre-Algebra class, bringing both a fun experiment for the students to try as well as some of the equipment that BPA uses in the field.

The students tested how different substances were more or less conductive to electricity, even testing some of their own “home-made” substances like hair gel! They learned how adding substances like salt and lemon juice to water affected its conductivity.

Both Kellie and Ron were enthusiastic about their engineering careers, describing how interesting it was to put their problem solving skills to work in the field every day. They explained the core elements of being a successful engineer – curiosity, a strong foundation in math and science, and a willingness to think about problems from different perspectives.



At the end of the class, the students all lined up holding hands, with a student at one end touching an object with a small electric charge which gave the last student in the line a small shock when he touched something. The human body is an amazing conductor. Watch out for that lightning!

National Engineers Month (February) is orchestrated by the **Business Education Compact**, a local non-profit organization dedicated to “make learning real” for Oregon and SW Washington students. In its 17th year,

the program has enabled more than 325,000 students to have the privilege of interacting with a real engineer in their classroom.

If you live in the Pacific Northwest, chances are you use electricity marketed and delivered by the **Bonneville Power Administration** – best known as BPA. The BPA is a not-for-profit federal electric utility that operates a high-voltage transmission grid comprising more than 15,000 miles of lines and associated substations in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana. It also markets more than a third of the electricity consumed in the Pacific Northwest.

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