Illinois State University is the lead entity of the Energy Learning Exchange (ELE) for the state of Illinois, through the combined efforts of the Center for Renewable Energy, Institute for Regulatory Policy Studies, and Center for Mathematics, Science, and Technology. ELE is a public-private partnership of universities, community colleges, schools, companies, labor unions, organizations and individuals with the mission to further Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) learning, preparing students for career pathways in energy and provide Illinois companies with a superior energy workforce.

October 14-20, 2013, was declared Careers in Energy Week in Illinois by Governor Pat Quinn. The Energy Learning Exchange, in cooperation with the Illinois Energy Workforce Consortium, coordinated events that week with schools, companies, and organizations as part of the Center for Energy Workforce Development’s nationwide effort to highlight careers in the energy field. Careers in Energy Week activities were designed to excite middle school and high school students about energy, how energy companies operate, types of energy careers available now and in the future, and the importance of energy companies in the economy. The ELE website provided materials for teachers to download and use in their classrooms, school kits were mailed to 153 teachers, and speakers visited a number of schools.

Dr. David Loomis (Director of the Energy Learning Exchange, and Professor of Economics at Illinois State University) spoke to middle school classes led by teacher Karie Tess at Urbana School District #116 (see photos), where students experimented with Kill-A-Watt meters to determine watts used in household appliances and calculate costs for a year. More information on the ELE at www.Energy.IllinoisState.edu.

If you would like to become a member of the Center for Renewable Energy, please contact Dr. David Loomis at 309-438-7979 or dloomis@ilstu.edu.
Illinois Wind for Schools (ILWFS) is an interdisciplinary program with applied research for incorporating wind energy into classrooms. The program is funded by a grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and is designed to integrate wind energy topics into the classroom through teacher professional development, curriculum development resources, instructional equipment, and onsite technical assistance. Lesson plans focus on energy and electricity, wind and weather, turbines and engineering, environmental considerations, and economics.

Six school districts were selected through an application process to be ILWFS partners for the 2013-2014 year; 15 school districts have participated since the start of the program. Recently, a workshop was held for teachers from Prairieview-Ogden Community Consolidation School District and Champaign Community School District #4, both in Champaign County. Other current partners are Collinsville Community Unit School District #1 in Madison County, Freeport School District #145 in Stephenson County, Jasper County Community School District #1, and Webber Township High School District #204 in Jefferson County.

The ILWFS program team consists of expert personnel from the Center for Renewable Energy and the College of Education at Illinois State University, plus the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs and the College of Business and Technology at Western Illinois University. In addition to instructing partner schools, the team also holds an annual free summer workshop for middle school and high school educators across the state that are interested in including wind energy topics in their curriculum. More details on the program are available on www.ILWFS.org.

Illinois State University’s Center for Renewable Energy and Center for Mathematics, Science, and Technology have been working together to coordinate workshops for middle and high school teachers on Next Generation Science Standards which focus on cross-cutting concepts including energy. Funded through a two-year grant from the Illinois School Board of Education, the program includes a two-week summer workshop (see photos), a two-week session next summer, plus field trips, follow-up assignments, additional class days, and curriculum development.

This program is designed to help teachers understand major principles of energy with real-world applications. Teachers then utilize that knowledge to develop and submit energy lesson plans that will be available for use in classrooms statewide next year.

Training to date has included classroom instruction, individual and group activities, and field trips such as to E.ON Climate & Renewable’s Pioneer Trail Wind Farm in July, and Invenergy’s Grand Ridge Solar Farm in October. The next follow-up class will be held in December.

The conference agenda will include plenary sessions of interest across renewable energy sectors, plus breakout session tracks to focus on each specific area.

More information will soon be available on the Center’s website, www.RenewableEnergy.ilstu.edu. If your company or organization would like to sponsor/exhibit at this event, please send an email to Janet at jniezgoda@ilstu.edu.