



Photos: Emily Visser

Green Officer, Gary Shaul, trains regional office staff on helping members with the new webconferencing system.

Web conferencing makes OPSEU greener

by Gary Shaul

The Greening OPSEU program is steadily working toward reducing OPSEU's environmental footprint and raising awareness among members and staff.

Energy conservation and awareness-raising remain the main priorities. With a greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction target of approximately 2% a year, we continue to reduce our consumption of electricity, natural gas, gasoline and air travel.

OPSEU spends approximately \$3 million per year on gasoline and air flights for members and staff to participate in meetings. The centrepiece for reaching our reduction target this year is the implementation of a province-wide webconferencing network.

Having learned a number of lessons from a pilot program in the winter, new, webconference-ready laptops, complete with web-cameras and

appropriate software have been sent to each regional office.

The main focus for the first year will be on province-wide membership committees using the new webconferencing system for at least one of their meetings.

The network is also available to members and staff for other uses. The OPSEU Resource Centre is available to assist with any questions or requests to use the new webconferencing system. ♪



Green achievements for 2009

In addition to the new webconferencing initiative, OPSEU can be proud of a large number of green achievements this year.

- 65 green stewards met at Convention 2009, which undertook a number of green initiatives including reduction of paper by more than 20,000 pages;
- The OPSEU green stewards list has close to 300 members;
- OPSEU is almost completely private water free;
- Staff can access quarterly membership lists online;
- There is a new head office recycling program;
- Building services introduced green cleaning products at head office;
- OPSEU participated in the labour caucus of the Western Climate Initiative;
- OPSEU held its first annual Earth Hour events and picture contest;
- Work continues on developing native plant gardens at head office with the hiring of a summer student;
- OPSEU responded to requests for support from a number of community-based green groups;
- The GreenUnion blog continues to publish greening OPSEU updates as well as other news and has had more than 10,000 visits.

Visit the *OPSEU GreenUnion blog* for more information: <http://greeningopseu.blogspot.com>