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UNH Marks Earth Day With Energy Star Recognitions, Town-Wide Clean-Up, Fair, And Forum On Reducing Carbon

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April 19, 2007

DURHAM, N.H. -- Environmental Protection Agency Regional Administrator Robert Varney, N.H. Department of Environmental Services Commissioner Tom Burack, several hundred students from Oyster River middle and high schools, and local environmental groups celebrated Earth Day today on the Thompson Hall lawn at the University of New Hampshire. Varney awarded five UNH buildings with the ENERGY STAR rating.

Varney presented plaques designating five UNH buildings -- residence halls Randall-Hitchcock, Sawyer, and Jessie Doe; buildings P, Q and R of the Woodside Apartment Complex; and administrative building Taylor Hall -- as achieving the ENERGY STAR efficiency rating. He acknowledged the work of students in Professor Ihab Farag's chemical engineering class Energy and the Environment, who worked with the UNH Energy Office to conduct energy audits of the building using EPA software.

Energy and the Environment students Katherine Doran, James Goudreault, and Gregory Halama scored Jessie Doe; Jarod Cournoyer, Simon Huang, and Thaddeus Webster scored Randall-Hitchcock; Helen Clark, Aimee Milliken, and Joshua Stuhr scored Woodside apartments; Nicholas Deveau, Jannisse Figueroa-Gay, and Danielle Kolacz scored Taylor Hall; and Veronique Archambault-Leger, Megan Creighton, and Courtney Hamer scored Sawyer.

"This is an excellent example of our UNH students working to benefit the community where they live. We hope to have more of these cooperative assessments with our surrounding communities in the future," said Farag.

Varney and Burack announced the winners of UNH's Student Energy Waste Watch Challenge, a four-week competition among residence halls and apartments to reduce each building's per capita energy and water consumption. Englehart Hall won first place, Smith took second and Sawyer won third. In total, UNH residence halls and apartments saved 173,990 kilowatt hours in electricity during the challenge for an electricity cost savings of \$22,000. Savings are equivalent in emissions reductions to removing 17 passenger cars from the road for one year.

Varney and Burack also greeted students from Oyster River Middle School and High School in Durham, who had fanned out across town to pick up debris. Durham Business Association president Johanna Knight and past president Richard Houghton presented certificates of appreciation to the students and their teachers, fifth grade teacher Dave Montgomery and high school biology teacher Jon Bromley.

The Earth Day Fair featured representatives from more than 30 UNH and community groups involved in sustainable living, including the UNH Office of Sustainability, New Hampshire Carbon Challenge, Amtrak Downeaster, Great Bay Coast Watch, Organic Dairy Research Farm, Clean Air-Cool Planet, Student Environmental Action Coalition, the UNH Energy Office, and Seacoast Area Bike Routes/Bike-Walk to Work Day 2007.

A forum of UNH and community experts on carbon reduction followed festivities on the Thompson Hall lawn. Tom Kelly, director of UNH's Office of Sustainability, moderated the forum in Dimond Library; panelists were Denise Blaha and Julia Dunder of the New Hampshire Carbon Challenge; Liz Burakowski, a UNH graduate student studying climate change; Matt O'Keefe of the UNH Energy Office; Steve Pesci of UNH Campus Planning; and Chris Skoglund, a UNH graduate student and coordinator of the Student Energy Waste Watch Challenge.