

Enterprise

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Town fair draws attention to green living alternatives

By Timothy Lamorte

GREENBURGH — Though St. Patrick's Day was a month and a half earlier, green was nonetheless the word of the day last Sunday at the Greenburgh Town Hall. The occasion, however, had nothing to do with the color.

Instead, the buzzwords of the day included biodiesel fuels, energy audits, and sustainable agriculture. The occasion was the town's second Green Living Fair, a four-hour event hosted by Greenburgh's energy conservation coordinator Nikki Coddington, who is also the deputy mayor of Irvington.

The fair attracted about 20 exhibitors from the tri-state area, including eco-friendly companies that peddled their products and conservation groups that promoted their causes.

Attendees, meanwhile, munched on carrots provided by the Stone Barns Center for Food & Agriculture in Pocantico Hills, an not-for-profit farm that offers educational programs, supplies fresh produce to select area restaurants, including Tomatillo in Dobbs Ferry, and hosts a farm market on its property on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays, starting at 1 p.m.

Noted Dobbs Ferry architect Stephen Tilly was drawn to the table of Bart Bettencourt, president of Bettencourt Green Building Supplies of Brooklyn. Among Bettencourt's products were countertops made of paper, bamboo plywood, and non-toxic paints.

Bettencourt started his company three years ago after nine prior years building furniture.

"What we figured out was that there



Wally Little and Jonathan Bernz of V.O. Tech look under the hood of a diesel pick-up converted to run on vegetable oil.

were a lot of great green materials out there that just weren't available in the northeast," he said. "And although people are really starting to understand energy efficiency and indoor air quality, material sourcing is still a big void."

Joseph Novella also noticed a void when he decided to start Green Star Insulation, a company based in Danbury, Conn. that specializes in cellulose insulation, which is made from recycled newspapers. In addition to Green Star, Novella owns a company that builds high density, multi-family housing.

"As a builder, I try to preach to my peers that we have an obligation to our buyers for comfort, for cost to the envi-

ronment, for our carbon impact, and to future generations," he said at the fair.

Novella buys his insulation from a company in Massachusetts that uses overprint newspapers treated with borate to create the insulation. The borate makes the paper fire-proof, mold-proof, fungus-proof, insect-proof and vermin-proof, Novella said. The cost, he added, is more than fiberglass, but less than foam.

"Fiberglass is really 20th century technology," he said. "Foam is a great insulator, a great air sealer. Cellulose is a fantastic air inhibitor and insulator. However, cellulose is 100 percent green."

As Novella made his pitch inside Town Hall, outside much of the atten-



Bart Bettencourt talks with Allegra and Larry Dengler of Dobbs Ferry about his green building supplies.

tion was on Jonathan Bernz and Wally Little of V.O. Tech, a Mahopac company that installs vegetable oil fuel systems in diesel powered cars and trucks.

The V.O. system uses a patented device called a "Geo" to heat the oil, which is stored in special fuel cells. The system costs between \$3,500 to \$5,500 to install. The miles-per-gallon, according to Bernz and Little, is the same as gasoline. The only drawback: "It smells like French fries when you drive by," Bernz said.

The system also requires the vehicle owner to manually filter the oil before, and to change the filter in the Geo every 10,000 miles. Their system, and others, will be on display at Greasestock 2007, an alternative fuel exhibit this Sunday, May 6, at Peter Pratt's Inn in Yorktown Heights. The exhibit is from 12-5 p.m.

"This may not be the answer, but it's one of the answers," Bernz said. "Somebody has to do something."