



Energy Awareness Programme 2004 Meath Energy Management Agency, Ireland

Summary

Meath Energy Management Agency (MEMA) is a local energy agency formed in 2002 by Meath County Council and the European Commission Directorate-General for Energy and Transport under the Save II programme.

Meath Energy Management Agency (MEMA) is located in Navan, County Meath, Ireland. County Meath is set in the east of the country and borders the Irish Sea coast. Navan is County Meath's capital and it is situated 30 kilometres north of Dublin. Navan was the fastest growing large town in Ireland between 1996 and 2002 and within this time its population increased by more than half from 12,810 in 1996 to 19,417 in 2002. This growth is set to continue for the foreseeable future.

For MEMA's initial Energy Awareness Campaign (Energy Awareness Week 2003), the area covered was mainly confined to Navan town and the surrounding area. Following on from the success of the previous year's campaign the target audience was broadened to the whole of County Meath. The campaign aimed to make people aware of the activities that were taking place locally during Energy Awareness Week. This was the first year Navan would participate in 'Car Free Day' and MEMA aimed to encourage the general public to opt for more sustainable choices of travel on this day. This was done through the various media, competitions and through the schools. Valuable lessons were learned with regard to time scales and staffing needs and this year's campaign provides MEMA with further learning tools for continual success in future campaigns.

End-user area

- New buildings
- Refurbishment of buildings
- Transport and mobility
- Financial instruments
- Industry
- Legal initiatives (regulations, directives, etc)
- Planning issues
- Sustainable communities
- User behaviour
- Education
- Other

Target Audience

- Citizens
- Households
- Property owners
- Schools and universities
- Decision makers
- Local and regional authorities
- Transport companies
- Utilities
- ESCOs
- Architects and engineers
- Financial institutions
- Other

Technical

- Energy efficiency
- Heating
- Cooling
- Appliances
- Lighting
- CHP
- District Heating
- Solar energy
- Biomass
- Wind
- Geothermal
- Hydropower
- Other

Context

Energy Awareness Week took place in Ireland from the 19th to 25th September 2004 and was promoted nationally by Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI). Sustainable Energy Ireland, formerly the Irish Energy Centre, is Ireland's national energy authority. The Authority promotes and assists environmentally and economically sustainable production, supply and use of energy, in support of Government policy, across all sectors of the Irish economy.

Energy Awareness Week aims to give people an opportunity to think about how they use energy and learn the ways we can become more energy efficient. This is an annual event with various activities taking place nationwide.



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Locally, in County Meath the Meath Energy Management Agency (MEMA) developed a plan for promoting energy awareness, energy efficiency and renewable energy in the Navan area and surrounds during Energy Awareness Week. It was Meath Energy Management Agency's (MEMA) second year to participate in the national campaign. Energy Awareness Week aimed to give people an opportunity to think about how they use energy and learn how to become more energy efficient.

Locally, in County Meath, the Meath Energy Management Agency (MEMA) developed a plan for promoting energy awareness, energy efficiency and renewable energy in County Meath during Energy Awareness Week.

Objectives

MEMA sought to build on the success of its Energy Awareness Week 2003 campaign and to advertise this to the bigger audience of County Meath. MEMA aimed to target schools, the general public and Meath County Council staff to raise awareness on energy issues during this week. It aimed to make the public in County Meath aware of its existence and its main objectives which remain:

- To promote the rational uses of energy;
- To promote renewable energy;
- To provide and disseminate energy information;
- To protect the environment;
- To reduce waste of energy in all sectors of society;
- To encourage replacement of imported fossil fuels with regionally generated renewable energy – in an effort to ensure security of energy supply where it is feasible.

Process

MEMA's key activities during Energy Awareness Week 2004 included:

Information Dissemination

MEMA organised information displays in the following locations:

- Meath County Hall, Navan
- Navan library
- Ashbourne area office and library
- Duleek area office and library
- Dunshaughlin area office and library
- Dunboyne library
- Kells area office
- Trim area office and library
- Oldcastle library
- Laytown library

Information available included the energy awareness week poster and MEMA's in-house publications aimed at citizens in County Meath:

- "What is Energy?"
- "Energy in the Home"
- "Energy in the Workplace"
- "Planning and Building an Energy Efficient Home"



- “Energy for the Motorist”
- “Renewable Energy in Co. Meath”
- “Electricity Meter Reading” leaflet

In addition, the new MEMA brochure plus several SEI produced leaflets and posters were on display.

MEMA borrowed an exhibition on “Choices for Sustainable Living” from the national environmental information organisation ENFO. ENFO is Ireland’s public information service on environmental matters including sustainable development. This exhibition was put on display in the Navan Library to coincide with Energy Awareness Week. The exhibition highlighted the concept of sustainable development and demonstrated the scope for making sustainable choices for saving energy in every day living at work, home or during leisure periods.

Competitions

➤ Energy Awareness Week Quiz

Energy Awareness Week Quiz question forms were available to the public at the information display locations throughout the Council area offices and in the MEMA office. Meath County Council County Hall received the most public entries.

The winner, Phil Geoghegan, from Kildalkey received a Flogas Superser Catalytic Heater, which ensures low levels of non-combusted fuel. The other winners received a gift voucher sponsored by Forde Furniture Superstore:

- €100 Helen O’Connell, Navan
- €50 Kathleen Slater, Ashbourne
- €50 Tracey McKeown, Navan
- €25 Aodhagan Downey, Julianstown

➤ Meath County Council Intranet Quiz

MEMA had quiz questions posted every day from Monday 20th to Friday 24th September 2004 on the Council’s Intranet site (with 520 users) (Appendix 2). The response to the quiz was good, with 15 – 20 replies per day. MEMA selected two winners for each day as follows:

- *Monday Winners – Chris Garde / Adrian Santry*
- *Tuesday Winners - Julie O’ Reilly / Teresa Quinn*
- *Wednesday Winners – James Mooney / David Muldoon*
- *Thursday Winners – Silvana Di Cioccio / Paul Kinsella*
- *Friday Winners – Mary Murphy (Sports) / Christy Clarke*

The winners received an Energy Awareness Week T-shirt, ESB CFL light bulb, SEI magnet and novelty ‘windmill’ pencil, which they collected from the MEMA office the following week.

➤ Hot Air Balloon Trip Competition

MEMA organised the regional radio station to run a quiz question on the first day of Energy Awareness Week. On Monday 20th September LMFM radio station presented an energy quiz question throughout the day. The question was: “If a person turns down their heating temperature this winter by 1°C – what percentage of Euro savings will be achieved? – a) 1%, b) 5% or c) 10%”. People were asked to call the MEMA office with their answers. Entrants with the correct answer (c) 10% were entered into a draw for a hot air balloon flight for two donated by Meath County Council and the National Ballooning Championships. The winner was Angie McGlynn from Kells.



➤ **Wood Pellet Stove Competition**

Martin Forde of Forde Fireplace & Stoves, Kilcock Co. Meath operated and displayed a wood pellet stove in the reception area of County Hall from Monday to Friday during Energy Awareness Week. People were encouraged to come in and view the stove in operation and to direct queries to Martin Forde who was available at the demonstration. Martin Forde will hold a draw for one of these wood pellet stoves in December 2004. Entry forms were available for this draw in County Hall during Energy Awareness Week.

➤ **School's Poster Competition**

During Energy Awareness Week (Car Free Day), the Agency promoted a school's poster competition under the theme of "Sustainable School Travel" to encourage students to think about how they travel to school (Appendix 3). Prizes were offered to primary schools and to transition years and CSPE students in secondary schools. All schools in County Meath (100 primary schools and 20 secondary schools) were sent information regarding the Car Free Day poster competition.

Three schools participated in the competition. Mary Plunkett (Administrative Officer, Pride of Place, Meath County Council) selected the winners for the poster competition. The winners were as follows:

- Ryan Nevin, EOB and Scott Lyons, St. Patrick's National School, Slane, Co. Meath
- Leah Holmes, Caroline Nolan and Laura Keogh, O'Growney National School, Athboy, Co. Meath
- Justine Stafford, Katie Tully and Brian Shankey, Kilbeg National School, Carlanstown, Kells, Co. Meath

Prize packages contained one family zoo pass and two €20.00 book vouchers, and were posted to each school at the beginning of November.

Media Coverage

Energy Awareness Week was covered in the local newspapers (The Weekender and The Meath Chronicle) and National Papers (The Irish Times and The Irish Independent).

On Tuesday 21st September 2004 MEMA staff (Valerie Norton) was interviewed on a live LMFM radio broadcast (Darragh Nelson show) regarding MEMA's participation and schedule of activities for Energy Awareness Week 2004.

The public were encouraged to visit Meath County Council offices to view the wood pellet stove in operation and they were also recommended to visit the MEMA offices on the Thursday (23rd) and Friday (24th) of that week to avail of the free ESB CFL light bulb promotion.

There was coverage in the media prior to Car Free Day in the local papers: 'The Meath Chronicle' and 'The Weekender'. On the morning of Car Free Day, Valerie Norton (MEMA) was interviewed on local radio station LMFM. The interviewer Michael Reid from 'Loose Talk' began discussions on how Navan was participating in the 2004 campaign. The media coverage created much public awareness about the day and made people aware that Navan was included in Car Free Day.

The Walking Bus initiative in Laytown National School was cited as a prime example of what people can do to participate in Car Free Day initiatives if they take up the challenge. As a follow-up to Car Free Day the Meath Chronicle contacted MEMA at the end of September to get feedback on Car Free Day. Geraldine Cusack (MEMA) reiterated that 2004 was the first year that the Council participated in promoting the day and 'soft measures' such as information dissemination were chosen to initiate discussion and debate around sustainable travel issues. She indicated that planting a seed of thought on sustainable travel in peoples' minds during the week was the first step as a catalyst to spark discussion and further uptake in 'Walking Bus' school schemes throughout the County.

Car Free Day 2004

Navan participated in Car Free Day 2004 through creating awareness and publicising the day through the media and by displaying posters and literature throughout the town. As the focus Europe-wide was on worker mobility and safer routes to schools MEMA targeted Meath County Council employees and the schools in County Meath.



Car Free Day was publicised to Council staff via the internal website and prizes were offered as incentives to any staff member who participated. Unfortunately due to very bad weather on the 22nd of September there was no participation by the Meath County Council staff on the day.

Posters and information leaflets were displayed at various locations throughout the council buildings in Navan and at the following locations:

- Meath County Hall, Navan
- Navan library
- Ashbourne area office and library
- Duleek area office and library
- Dunshaughlin area office and library
- Dunboyne library
- Kells area office
- Trim area office and library
- Oldcastle library
- Laytown library

MEMA also made contact with a local group, the Navan Road Club. This group organizes various cycling activities and on Car Free Day they arranged that their members cycled to work or school in Navan.

➤ **Sonairte's Car Free Day Campaign**

MEMA assisted volunteers at Sonairte (national ecological and environmental awareness centre) in Laytown County Meath to promote Car Free Day in the Northeast Meath area. Letters were drafted by Sonairte (printed and posted by MEMA) and were distributed to local businesses and community groups. The letters invited people to 'give their car a holiday' on Car Free Day. They were encouraged to car pool, use public transport, walk or cycle on the day. The letters were followed up with phone calls advising people of the alternatives to use on Car Free Day.

Energy Efficient Lighting Promotion

People who visited the MEMA office at 2A Cannon Row, Ground Floor, Navan on Thursday 23rd and Fri 24th or the REIO information evening on Thursday 23rd completed a brief survey and were given a choice to select a CFL bulb for use in their home. ESB Customer Service sponsored the CFL light bulbs. In addition ESB was promoting various cut-price offers on CFL bulbs throughout Navan supply shops during the week.

MEMA received 60 – 70 light bulbs and various promotional materials from ESB. There were four different light bulbs available:

- Philips 20W Energy Saver, lifetime 12 years
- Philips 20W Softone Energy Saver, lifetime 6 years
- Philips 15W Extra Mini, Lifetime 15 years
- Philips 35W Halogen Bulb

MEMA received 37 completed home energy surveys. Most of the people (51%), who completed the survey and received a bulb, were from Navan. 24% of attendees were living outside of County Meath. Only approximately 20% of attendees were already using CFLs.

In addition approximately 20 County Council employees received a light bulb as a prize from Energy Awareness Week Intranet Quiz (10 light bulbs) or as a thank you token of appreciation for helping MEMA with the Energy Awareness Week Campaign.



Renewable Energy Exhibition and Information Evening

Sustainable Energy Ireland's Renewable Energy Office (REIO) hosted an information event in Kells Co. Meath on Thursday 23rd September at the Headford Arms Hotel. The event consisted of an informal drop-in information clinic with a range of technology suppliers, followed by a renewable energy information evening. MEMA was represented at the event where people were encouraged to stop by to meet our staff, receive information and enquire about the agency's work programmes.

The renewable energy information evening consisted of presentations about renewable energy (solar, geothermal and biomass) and low energy architecture.

The organizers were delighted at the turnout and reported that the information evening held in Kells during Energy Awareness Week had the best public participation of all their information evenings in the country.

Energy Awareness in Schools

➤ Energy Awareness Workshops

MEMA presented 'Energy Awareness Workshops' at several schools throughout the week. SEI provided MEMA with the education materials necessary for the workshops. The workshops involved presenting energy information concepts to groups of students (3rd to 6th class students aged from 8 to 12 years of age). The presentation sought to explain to primary school children, as simply as possible, the need to become more energy efficient in every day life. In particular it highlighted that students can make more energy efficient choices. Students learned that from the time they wake up in the morning and travel to school, to the time they switch of the lights at bedtime they have choices they can make to live sustainably.

After the presentation students took part in an energy awareness game provided to MEMA by SEI. The Energy Game is a floor game, consisting of large floor mat. Questions asked included:

- Can saving energy save you money?
- Can we use solar energy in Ireland?
- Can recycling energy save money?

There were different levels of questions depending on the particular age group of students playing the game.

➤ Pfizer Science Bus

MEMA was invited by Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI) to incorporate the 'Pfizer Science Bus' into our schedule of activities during Energy Awareness Week 2004. Four schools (Skryne, Laytown, Ashbourne and Slane National Schools) in County Meath were selected by MEMA based on their interest in Energy issues over the course of the past year. On Car Free Day the bus visited Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh in Laytown, County Meath. Students were taken on board where they participated in energy related experiments from the SEI and MEMA facilitators.

➤ MEMA's 'Walking Bus' Promotion

An exciting initiative that MEMA is promoting as part of its ongoing campaign is the 'Walking Bus' programme. MEMA is encouraging primary schools in County Meath to organise a 'Walking Bus' to school. Schools interested in participating in this initiative are supplied by MEMA with reflective jackets for all the participants.

Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh in Laytown, County Meath was the county's first school to have a 'Walking Bus' Programme. It was a pilot scheme set up in June 2004 by MEMA, the school's road safety team and Meath County Council's Road Safety Officer. The Walking Bus was officially launched by Meath County Council's Cathaoirleach Councillor Tommy Reilly and Minister of State Sile de Valera (Department of Education and Science) at the school on Wednesday morning 22nd of September (Car Free Day).

There are 460 pupils at this school and on Car Free Day almost 100 of the pupils formed the 'Walking Bus' and all of the 460 pupils and 23 staff assembled in the school's hall for the official presentation. The pupils waved flags of various European countries as they marched into the hall. Meath Energy Management Agency had commissioned a piece of art from local artist Colette Gough, which the Cathaoirleach Tommy Reilly presented to the school's principal Maurice Daly. The presentation event was attended by Minister Sile de Valera, County



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Council Cathaoirleach and Counsellor Tommy Reilly, the parish priest Monsignor Hanly and MEMA staff (V. Norton & J. Lampainen).

The day's proceedings were publicised extensively in the local papers: 'The Weekender', 'The Meath Chronicle' and 'The Drogheda Independent'. It was also covered on Daragh Nelson's radio show on LMFM. MEMA anticipates that many more schools in County Meath will consider setting up a 'Walking Bus' at their school. As a result of the coverage that this school received on Car Free Day we have had two schools in County Meath begin initial steps in setting up their 'Walking Bus'.

Financial resources and partners

All of the activities and events organised by MEMA during Energy Awareness Week were operated with the full support of the Environment Department of Meath County Council.

The costs for Energy Awareness Week are presented in Appendix 4. The total cost was €3520.00. Printing and copying brochures and other material incurred the biggest cost. Due to time constraints MEMA needed to get a substantial number of brochures photocopied by an Office Printing Service. The copying cost amounted to €1510.00 while the in-house printing cost which took up a lot of time amounted to €421.00.

Postage costs for letters sent to schools and Sonairte's Car Free day campaign letters amounted to €69.00.

A substantial cost to the campaign was attributed purchasing the reflective jackets for the Laytown 'Walking Bus' participants (€1200.00). The school's poster competition prize cost was €225.00 and the 'Walking Bus' prize cost €95.00.

Generous sponsorship for prizes was offered by Flogas (gas heater), Forde Furniture Superstore (gift vouchers for €225.00), hot air balloon trip (Meath County Council & National Ballooning Championships), ESB (CFL light bulbs) and SEI (t-shirts).

Results

As a result of MEMA's publicity on the various activities there were numerous information requests received during the week and those following. The CFL light bulb promotion succeeded in getting members of the general public to become aware of the location of the MEMA office.

As a result of answering the various questions in the competitions meant that people had to think about how they were using energy and provided them with information in more sustainable choices.

All of these activities combined to promote energy efficiency in the county. MEMA attempted through these activities to reduce energy consumption in County Meath, thereby reducing local pollution and greenhouse gases.

Lessons learned and repeatability

Energy Awareness Week provides an ideal opportunity to promote Energy Awareness locally in County Meath. As it is being promoted nationwide via the media (national television advertisements, national newspapers and radio broadcasts), MEMA can build on this campaign and promote it locally.

Again as in MEMA's 2003 campaign, the competitions proved very successful as an incentive for public participation in Energy Awareness, therefore competition ideas will continue for forthcoming campaigns.

The school presentations have continued at being a huge success and the fact that it was possible for MEMA to avail of the Pfizer Science Bus proved very rewarding. This type of interactive involvement proved to be very productive and enjoyable, and gained enthusiasm from the children.

Printing and folding brochures and other materials is very time consuming. Printing will begin at least eight weeks prior to Energy Awareness Week 2005. Using an outsourced printing/copying service is quick but expensive (Appendix 4).

Distributing the Energy Awareness Week posters will be completed at least one week before Energy Awareness Week 2005. Poster distribution requires two to three full days. Posters will be "professionally"



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designed for 2005 because shops are already full of “homemade” posters and Energy Awareness need to stand out among the other announcements.

Information distribution to area offices will be started at least one week before Energy Awareness Week 2005. Area offices are located at distances over 10 miles apart from each other and sufficient time is needed for driving from one area office to another to be able to set up the bulletin boards. Area offices generally have very limited space for displays so only the most important material will be set on display for distribution at these locations.

Quizzes and competitions will be sufficiently advertised. The response to the Energy Awareness Quiz will be improved with more advertising in key locations such as libraries and area offices.

As this was Navan’s first time to participate in Car Free Day, the main aim of the campaign organised by MEMA was to create awareness. This was accomplished through the poster displays and through the media representation. If Navan participates in Car Free Day 2005 the Council can be encouraged to take on some ‘hard’ measures e.g. closing off a street for pedestrian activities where appropriate in the town centre. MEMA could possibly work with other departments within the County Council to aim at a campaign that would achieve more measurable results. The general response from the public to Car Free Day in 2004 was an overall feeling that traffic in Navan and congestion on the N3 (Dublin-Navan road) was a threat to the quality of life in Navan. Navan as a commuter town to Dublin is struggling with a deficient public transport system.

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