Have Solar, Will Travel: The Mobile Lab Hits the Road

If you found yourself traveling the highways of the Northeast this spring and summer, you may have spotted a silver van and trailer, brightly decorated with logos and photographs advertising KVCC’s renewable energy training program. In the spring of 2014, Mike Paradis and Amy Hudnor of KVCC began travelling the Northeast in the new mobile solar training lab. The van and trailer are packed full of the equipment needed for solar PV hands-on training. The goal is to assist regional solar training by providing instructional support and equipment where it is needed.

In the spring, Hudnor drove the mobile solar lab to workshops in Connecticut and New Hampshire on Solar PV code requirements. The workshops reached a combined 150 professionals, including code officials, PV Installers, electricians and fire marshals. Instructor Chris Warfel used the solar equipment delivered by the mobile lab to demonstrate solar principals in the National Electrical Code.

Paradis and Hudnor drove the mobile lab over the summer to deliver the hands-on portion of a hybrid course ‘Solar PV Design and Installation’. Paradis developed this new course for KVCC’s Solar Instructor Training Network participants. Hands on three day courses were delivered to instructor trainees at University of Bridgeport, Bridgeport, CT, Cheney Technical High School, Manchester, CT, and SUNY Sullivan, Loch Sheldrake, NY. Instructor trainees enjoyed the opportunity to get hands on experience with solar systems on mini mock roofs and ballasted mounting systems, and powering up the systems with mobile electrical trainers. “The mobile solar lab has all the equipment needed to support solar training where it is needed” said Paradis. “We can provide solar instruction and mentoring to schools and training centers that may have only limited equipment or no equipment at all.”

Over the fall and winter of 2014/2015, Paradis will be visiting each SITN partner school to provide instructor trainees with solar training equipment to use with their students. Paradis will also be mentoring instructors on solar teaching techniques.