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Duke Energy volunteers paint, add gutters to Timber Hill lodge

Contributed By Sue Kiesewetter | Enquirer contributor

On a normal day members of Duke Energy's information technology department work inside making sure the company's computers are running smoothly.

They assist users with problems, repair glitches, and troubleshoot problems on a consistent basis.

Last week workers from the company's downtown and Plainfield, Ind., offices had anything but a normal work day.

Donning shorts and T-shirts, the IT workers grabbed paint brushes and drills before heading outdoors to paint the outside of the Wagon Wheel Lodge in Fairfield Township's Timber Hill camp in the Rentschler Forest Preserve. The volunteers also installed gutters using materials they ordered.

It was part of the company's Volunteers in Action, a part of the Global Service Event program that gives employees time off to do approved community service projects.

"This is different than what I normally do," said Bob Standor, of Covington. "What I do is less physical than this. This is a good change of pace."

Former Ben-Gal cheerleader Liz Amburgey said the work went quickly because so many people were helping. Volunteers brushed off dirt from the peeling paint before applying fresh coats of paint.

"It goes a lot faster when you have so many hands working," said Amburgey, of Hyde Park. "We were expecting it to take all day."

Steve Welte said he made the arrangements for the work detail after talking with Kris Roselle, a former girl scout leader, now serving as chairwoman of the Timber Hill Restoration Coalition.

"It's a giving back to the community," said Welte, of Fairfield.

Nearly two years ago Timber Hill, a former camp that had fallen into disrepair, was purchased from the Great Rivers Girl Scout Council by Butler County MetroParks. Volunteers and park officials have worked to restore the camp, which opened to youth groups in July.

About 180 volunteers spent more than 800 hours last October laying mulch along trails, cleaning buildings and installing a drainage culvert that earned the group The Enquirer's Make A Difference Day award. This spring members of Fairfield High School's Interact Club put in 20 new bunks at the lodge.

"It's very refreshing to see a good neighbor like Duke Energy doing this," said Christine Matacic, a coalition board member and Liberty Township trustee. "When volunteers do projects like this it helps everyone and it's less taxpayer dollars that have to be spent."

Eventually the coalition, in cooperation with MetroParks, would like to replace water lines throughout the camp, construct a modern bathhouse, expand the lodge and replace tent platforms at group campsites.

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