



February 8, 2009

Climate Crossfire

By Sue Buck • OBSERVER STAFF WRITER •

Two friends took opposing sides on the global warming issue at North Farmington High School Thursday.

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Chris Edwards, a Fox 2 meteorologist from Farmington, and Kevin O'Shea, a Birmingham attorney, poked holes in different arguments in Climate Crossfire, a debate presentation aimed at creating discussion about global climate change.

The goal was to show students opposing viewpoints on global warming and guide them toward "forward-thinking and challenging perspectives."

O'Shea pointed out that sometimes different thoughts are presented during different decades. During the 1970s, for example, some scientists stated that the earth was cooling down rather than warming up. "Back then, it was global cooling," O'Shea said.

He found data, also, that said there are more polar bears now and not less, as some say due to global warming.

"One-third to one-fifth of scientists don't believe in climate change," O'Shea. "I'm not an expert, but I do know a media-manufactured crisis when I see one."



Trial attorney Kevin O'Shea starts the debate on global climate change at North Farmington High School Thursday. He said the argument that the climate is dangerously changing our world is a "chicken little" argument while his opponent in the debate, Meteorologist Chris Edwards, says climate change is a "reality" we will have to face sooner rather than later.

He criticized Al Gore who has pushed the idea of global warming.

"Al Gore is the Chicken Little of the 21st century," O'Shea said.

Some student questions centered on how much the global sea level is expected to rise and how soon.

"If the ice cap on Greenland were to melt, the sea level could go up dramatically," Edwards said. "It could go up a meter in the next 50 years. That is significant because 150 million people could be displaced."



Plenty of charts and graphs were on display during a debate on global climate change at North Farmington High School Thursday.

Edwards urged students to reduce their own carbon footprint by becoming more aware of their own activities.

O'Shea said the discussion continues to be open. "The debate is not over," O'Shea said. "Don't be afraid to ask questions."

Senior Ian Van Tassel had more questions after the program.

With China and India intent on industrial development, they are responsible, too, for climate change, he said.

"It (global warming) is resulting from growing industries," Van Tassel said.

Van Tassel tried to weigh the impact of methane versus CO₂ in the environment.

"What is causing more severe climate change?" he asked.

Van Tassel, who hopes to study engineering in college, liked that North Farmington was taking "a green approach to things."

North Farmington High School's interdisciplinary theme this year is "Good Earth, People, Planet, Prosperity."

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