



STEVEN LANE/The Columbian

Running Start student Mark Oldaker, 18, right, with help from student Larisa Romanchenko, 30, calculates his ecological footprint Thursday at Clark College. Oldaker's carbon footprint was slightly larger than average, but still in the acceptable range.

SIZING UP FOOTPRINT

Clark event helps raise climate-change consciousness

By **ERIK ROBINSON**
Columbian staff writer

If everyone lived like Mark Oldaker, it would take six Earths to support us all.

Oldaker, an 18-year-old Vancouver resident, was among some 500 people at Clark College who tapped into an online assessment of their carbon footprint during a national "teach-in" focusing on global warming.

"I did it for the fun of it," he said. "I'm not purposefully wasteful."

Oldaker is within the range of

ON THE WEB

For a video, visit:

www.columbian.com/video

For an online carbon footprint calculator, visit:

www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/ind_calculator.html

the per capita American lifestyle, which requires 24 acres to support each American in food, shelter, mobility and services. The individual carbon calculation was among several workshops, seminars and class exercises to raise awareness of our personal effect on the globe.

Students and staff at Clark College, Washington State University Vancouver and at least one area high school participated in the Focus the Nation event in Clark County.

Tim Swinehart, a third-year social studies teacher at Evergreen High School, said U.S. Rep. Brian Baird, D-Vancouver, called on EHS students to reduce their own carbon footprint by 20 percent. Later in the day, Swinehart said, a few

EARTH, back page



STEVEN LANE/The Columbian

Rebecca Martin and her daughter, Maya Martin, 9, talk to Jacques Mendro, a representative of Corporate Express, about eco-friendly food storage containers at Clark College on Thursday.

Earth:

From Page C1

dozen students engaged in a teleconference with state Sen. Craig Pridemore, a Vancouver Democrat who has pursued state legislation to address climate change.

Some theater students dressed as endangered penguins while teachers collaborated on climate-related topics, Swinehart said.

"This provided an impetus for teachers in different disciplines to get together on a single day and address these issues," he said.

At Clark College, a Green Business Solutions Fair included the carbon footprint calculation along with a variety of

products and practices billed as sustainable: hybrid automobiles, composting techniques and biofriendly products.

Jim Malinowski, a utilities technology instructor, convened a panel focused on fossil fuels that account for 84 percent of U.S. energy use.

"I'm convinced there's an impact," Malinowski said. "But even if you don't believe it, we're burning up a huge percentage of the world's fossil fuel supply. I think reducing our use of fossil fuels is the right thing to do."

In Washington, researchers have raised the possibility that the buildup of greenhouse gases — largely since the dawn of the Industrial Age — will batter beaches with rising sea levels, spark more forest fires, and lead to winter flooding

and summer droughts.

Clark College President Bob Knight convened a forum soliciting ideas for "Penguin Nation" to engage in more sustainable practices. Ideas included starting shuttles between Clark and WSU Vancouver, supplying locally grown food to the cafeteria and providing more water-distribution points as an alternative to bottled water out of vending machines.

"I want to be sure people don't think today is the only day we're going to think about this," Knight said.

ERIK ROBINSON, whose own lifestyle, if applied to everyone, would require the resources of 4.4 Earths, can be reached at 360-735-4551 or erik.robinson@columbian.com.