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Engineering week brings guests to school

MAHTOMEDI — The unusual assignment in several Mahtomedi science classes last week: Make six cups of coffee — two black, two with cream, one with sugar and one with cream and sugar.

To thrifty, caffeine-addicted adults, that might seem too simple an assignment. But most of the Caribou-patronizing high schoolers had never used a coffee maker.

After a first attempt that took some groups close to 15 minutes, engineers from Tapemark gave them a few pointers.

In engineering and producing a product, they told the students, there are seven forms of waste: waiting, (unnecessary) transportation, (unnecessary) motion, (excess) inventory, overproduction, overprocessing and defects (imperfect results).

On the second try, the groups of amateur baristas brewed only the requested six cups, made only one trip to the garbage can and cut their production time to five or 10 minutes by filing the cups with cream and sugar while waiting for the coffee to brew.

The coffee-making assign-



- Photo by Kristine Goodrich

Students in Mr. Young's class learn about the seven forms of waste by making coffee.

ment was one of several hands-on engineering activities at Mahtomedi High School last week for National Engineers Week.

Along with Tapemark, engineers from Medtronic, Boston Scientific and the Society of Women Engineers visited to lead activities and discussions. Most of those businesses and

organizations also are partners in the Mahtomedi Engineering Leadership Program at the middle and high schools. For more information on the program, visit mahtomedi.k12.mn.us and click on the link under the 'Schools' tab.

— Kristine Goodrich