

Washoe Parents

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Saving the Planet

What kids are learning
about the environment
and sustainable energy

5 ways your
family can
go green

Let's Move
National campaign
fights childhood
obesity





Yellow and blue make green

Solar power and new blue bins improve education and save money

BY MIKALEE BYERMAN

The Washoe County School District is showing it is possible to enhance education while simultaneously saving money and the earth through two new green initiatives taking place at local schools.

"Our commitment is to our students, staff and the community," said Mark Stanton, Chief of Capital Projects and Facilities Management. "To be able to add innovation to classroom education while saving money for learning resources and being eco-friendly is a reflection of that goal."

The first project, a new recycling initiative, already is in effect at all local schools and district offices. The second, a solar project, soon will be undertaken at dozens of schools, with approximately 40 schools projected to receive solar technology. Both programs include enhancements to environmental education in K-12 curriculum.

Putting the sun to work

The first two in a series of solar technology projects will be complete by June, with Bennett Elementary School and Wooster High School receiving roof-mounted photovoltaic installations. About 40 more schools are anticipated to follow suit by the end of next year.

Two different types of solar technology will be used to capture energy from the sun at local schools. Depending on the school's architecture, either a crystalline panel will sit atop roofing or a peel-and-stick, thin-film technology will adhere to metal roofing.

"Simply put, sunshine goes into the panels, and electricity comes out," said Mike Black, project manager. "There are no moving parts, no fossil fuels burned, no pollutants, no noise and zero carbon footprint. Once installed, we expect them to generate free energy for 20 to 25 years."

The initial cost of installation for the first few projects is being offset by economic stimulus funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Rebates from NV Energy's SolarGenerations program then will fund future



RECYCLING

Diedrichsen Elementary School fourth-graders Tanner Johnson, 10 and Kameran McCaig, 10 pose with one of the school's new recycling bins.

projects at other schools, while energy savings will add money to the general fund, which is used to pay for teacher salaries and school supplies like textbooks. The anticipated savings per year, per school: \$14,000.

"We're excited about our continued partnership with the Washoe County School District on this project," said John Hargrove, project manager for energy efficiency & conservation at NV Energy. "We hope other school districts will follow their great example. This is yet another excellent opportunity for the school

district to save money that can be invested in our children's education. The solar panels will also make it possible for students to learn firsthand about the benefits of renewable energy."

Blue is the new green

New fixtures in the halls of all local elementary, middle and high schools will be brilliant blue rolling recycling

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Yellow and blue make green

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bins. Outside, giant yellow recycling receptacles will now sit alongside ubiquitous green dumpsters.

"The key message here is the more each school recycles, the more savings we'll realize," said Bruce Deetken, energy manager for the Washoe County School District. "We're projecting an annual savings of at least \$200,000 per year, and there is absolutely no cost involved in this new initiative."

The school district is teaming with Waste Management to launch this pilot program, which is intended to highlight the benefits of a "single

stream" recycling process. Single stream means most recyclable materials can go unsorted into a single container. Examples of acceptable recyclables include all paper, cardboard, books, magazines, aluminum cans, tin cans, glass and plastic bottles.

"Single-Stream Recycling is the next step for the Truckee Meadows region as we focus on diverting as much recyclable material from landfills," said Justin Caporusso, Waste Management spokesperson. "We are excited to partner with the Washoe County School District on this Single-Stream Recycling pilot, and we look forward to continuing to work with Washoe County, Reno and Sparks on expanding the program to local residents and businesses."
