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Butte College to produce more power from sun than it uses

By Staff Reports
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Butte College is well on its way to becoming the first college in the United States to produce more energy from solar power than it uses.

The goal is to be "grid-positive" by May 2011, with approval from the college board of trustees to add another 15,000 photovoltaic panels.

When the third phase of solar panel installation is completed, Butte will generate 6.4 million kilowatt hours of electricity a year — enough power for 9,200 homes.

The plan is to provide all the electricity the college needs, plus more that can be sold to the energy grid.

The new solar panels will be on top of parking areas, rooftops and covered walkways, as well as mounted on the ground.

The cost is \$17 million, with \$12.65 million through low-interest federal Clean Renewable Energy Bonds, and the rest through the college.

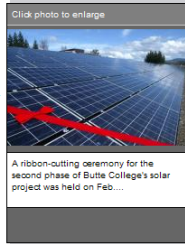
Construction begins this month.

The combination of the campus solar projects is projected to save \$150 million over 30 years, said Mike Miller, director of facilities, planning and management.

When completed, the college will reduce carbon dioxide by 6.9 million pounds, sulfur dioxide by 27,000 pounds and nitrogen oxide by 20,000 pounds each year.

The solar project will be used for solar training classes. Also, several workers on the project are apprentices who went through the campus solar installation training program, said Norm Nielsen, owner of Chico Electric, who is working with DPR Construction on the work.

Over the past several years, Butte College



has earned a number of national awards for sustainability leadership, including the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education 2009 Campus Leadership Award, the 2009 Environmental Protection Agency Green Power Partnership Award, the 2008 National Wildlife Association Campus Chill-Out Award, and several Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) building certifications from the U.S. Green Building Council, 2010.

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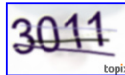
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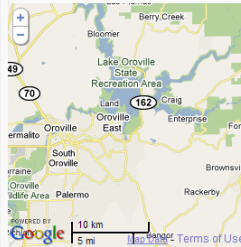
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