

FLIPPING THE SWITCH



Photo attribution

Memorial Middle School principal Sandra Madrid flips the switch connecting the school's solar panel to the PNM grid. The solar panel will generate power for the greenhouse, and the school will be reimbursed for the power it saves the electric company.

School links solar panel to grid

By Don Pace
Las Vegas Optic

Fifth-graders from around the East Las Vegas school district were introduced to a green world taking shape at Memorial Middle School during a flipping-the-switch ceremony that connected a solar panel at the school to the Public Service Company of New Mexico grid.

Shirley Marlow, 4-H science, technology, engineering and math specialist, said the school was one of five in the state chosen by the state Department of Energy and Minerals to receive the solar panel that produces 634 watts of electricity a day, powering the greenhouse on the middle school campus.

Gerald Chacon of the New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service, one



Angel Trujillo, right, a sixth-grader at Memorial Middle School, gives a presentation on harnessing wind using a turbine. Middle school students built the turbines from a kit made by the company Kid Wind.

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Officials m decisions o

By Don
Las Vegas

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City officials said general overview of for information of Marquez added the body takes the wa ously and that theri cial council meeting concerns at a yet- date.

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Attorney Kyle H expertise in water "Mr. Milliken ha resources and a con of thought trying to proposal that would a real issues the city o ing in terms of wa quality issues."

Hydrogeologist and retired Univers co economics prof joined Harwood in

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Solar

From Page A1

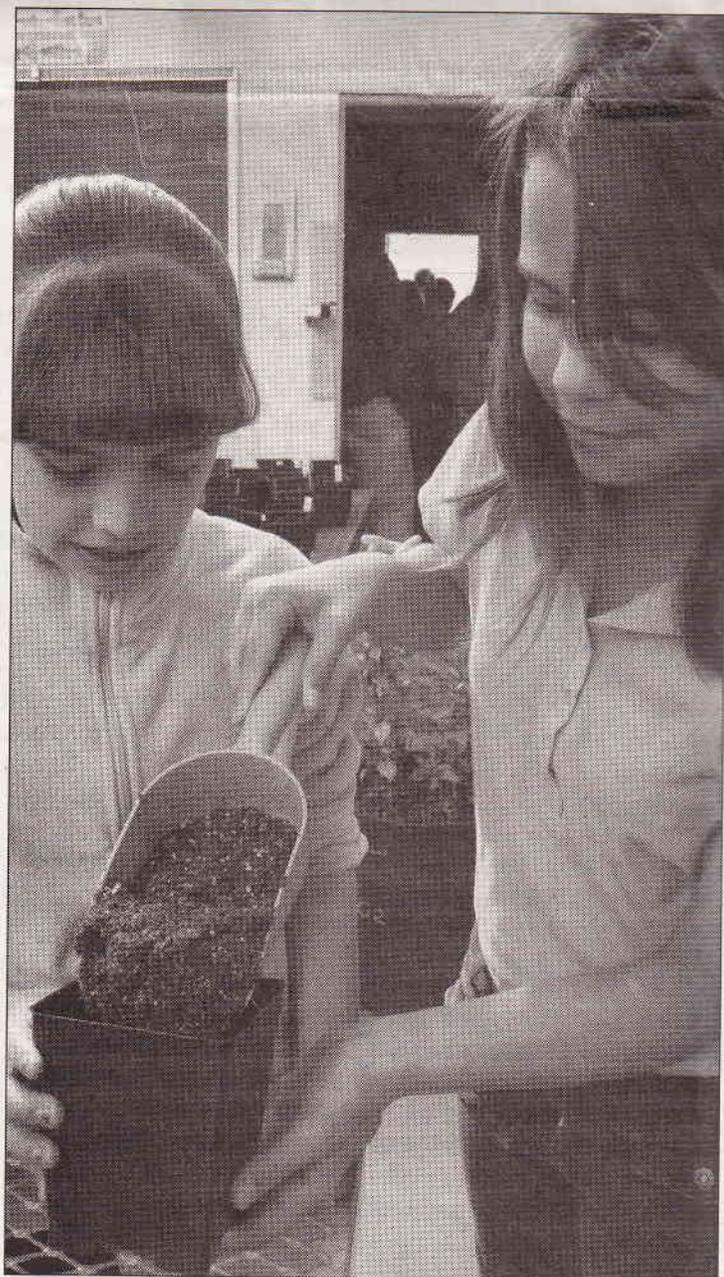
in our community. We are all tied together to this planet and have a responsibility in this role of sustainability and the only way we can do that is in the resources we have in all of you and that takes a lot of education. It's up to your generation to help us do that, and this project is one of the many things that you will use to learn how to be come more environmentally friendly and energy efficient," Chacon said.

Chacon said he saw tremendous opportunities for the students in this new age of technology, and besides, he said it was a lot of fun learning about new ways to do things.

"We're very excited about New Mexico State University and other universities' role in working with elementary and middle schools in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and we need all of your brain power and energy in order to make this earth sustainable," Chacon said.

After principal Sandra Madrid flipped the power switch, eight-grade students demonstrated things like baking using a solar oven, hydroelectric fuel cells and wind turbines, while sixth-grade students mentored the visiting fifth-graders.

Cary Lane, who works with Energy Concepts in Las Vegas and installs solar and wind systems around the state, said the solar panel



Don Pace/Optic photo

Chasity Gonzales, right, mentors Erika Baca, a fifth-grader at Legion Park Elementary, as the two plant seeds in the greenhouse. Kids from the elementary schools around the East district were invited to see some of the innovative projects being worked on at Memorial Middle School.

they worked on for the school may produce just a small amount of electricity, but it's like using building blocks and the potential is unlimited.

Peter Skelton, director of the Memorial's ag center, said the center was about much more than just agriculture.

"We're using agriculture

as a platform to teach science, but the broader context we're interested in is sustainability. We need to find systems that will be renewable. Scientists predict we have 100 years left of fossil fuels, so it means we're going to have to look for different ways and technologies that we can use to support ourselves."

Skelton said the students were demonstrating two different types of renewable systems. He said they were working with alternative energy systems and using compost to improve the earth's soil.

Marissa Baca and Chantel Davis were giving a presentation on solar ovens, which they said use light rays from the sun, which reflect off the mirrors around the oven and produces heat.

"I don't have an oven like this at home, but it would come in handy and save a lot of energy" Baca said.

Angel Trujillo, explaining the wind turbines, said, "Wind energy can power a small town just using one turbine. It's good clean energy and doesn't pollute the air and it's better than fossil fuel."

Skelton said the goal of the day's events was to get fifth-graders excited about science.

"We wanted to have our sixth-graders mentor our fifth-graders and provide the leadership for this sort of program and allow them to showcase their skills," Skelton said. He said it was working.

Clinton

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Brian Colon, former state Democratic Party chairman John Wertheim and former Ambassador Joe Wilson and his wife, Valerie Plame, who

says she was exposed as a CIA operative after her husband criticized the Bush administration's handling of prewar intelligence on Iraq.

Clinton was not expected to hold any public events while in New Mexico, a campaign spokeswoman said

ahead of the visit.

Her campaign did not return phone and e-mail messages seeking comment Sunday.

The Clinton campaign's last major fundraiser in New Mexico was attended by her husband, former President Bill Clinton, and about 100

supporters in Santa Fe days ahead of the state Democratic Party Caucus on Feb. 5. She was last in New Mexico Feb. 2, days ahead of Super Tuesday.

Hillary Clinton narrowly beat her opponent Barack Obama by 1,709 votes in New Mexico's caucus.