

City of Kingsville Partners With DOE on Solar Energy Project

It's a first for Texas: Using solar power to help meet a school's energy needs and seizing the opportunity to teach students about renewable energy. The Kingsville City Commission and Chamber of Commerce (TX), the lead partners in Rebuild Kingsville — in cooperation with the Department of Energy's (DOE) Rebuild America program and Million Solar Roofs initiative, Central and South West Electric Utility Corporation (CSW), Central Power and Light Company (CPL), the Foundation for Environmental Education, and the Kingsville Independent School District — is partnering in an exciting community-based project that's designed to save energy and serve as a teaching tool.

A formal dedication ceremony for the installed solar project at the Gillett Intermediate School in Kingsville on April 18 drew government and business community representatives and 600 students who roared in approval as Gillett Intermediate School Principal Oscar H. Acosta officially took possession of the system.

The project began last January when CSW/CPL donated and installed six energy-efficient photovoltaic panels on the school grounds. The 1.2 kilowatt solar panel array is directly connected

to the main electrical grid of the school building. The system provides students with an opportunity to learn from the computer-generated solar data that is collected. All Gillett students have access to computers and may view output from the solar-energy project and other online information. [To view information from the project, visit www.kvisd.esc2.net.]

Science teachers have incorporated the solar energy panels and the curriculum provided by the partnership into its normal studies. "We are learning from this project along with our students," noted one Gillett science teacher.

The project has strong backing from Kingsville Mayor Phil Esquivel, who stresses its importance in teaching children about energy efficiency. Will Thierry, area business manager for CPL, says Gillett students now have "the opportunity to explore first-hand the possibilities of renewable energy technology which could be a viable source of energy in the future."

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