

# School takes lead on energy use

By Sarah Junkin  
*The Eagle*

Cochrane High school is poised to become the very first in Canada to run part of its building using sustainable energy alone.

"We're hoping that by June 2005 we'll be running two, maybe three classrooms using 24 solar panels on the ceiling of the lyceum, and a wind generator on the corner of the gymnasium," said Christine Waiand, a Grade 11 student, one of 15 involved in the project.

Teacher Earl Binder said he and colleague Stephanie Bennett came up with the idea four years ago.

"We realized we were doing a lot of teaching about this kind of thing in the classroom, but that it was all theory. There was no chance to see a practical application," he explained. "So we decided to make one happen."

Binder said they tried to raise money through the school division but after hitting "a few road blocks," they looked to private and corporate sponsors. They have now raised approximately \$13,000 of the \$40,000 required for

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— Cochrane High teacher Earl Binder on a plan to set up alternative energy at the school.

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the project.

"It's amazing how it's taken off," he said. "People have been fantastic . . . It helps that the kids are so passionate about it and want to help make it happen."

Binder said once the initial equipment has been set up it can easily be expanded to include more of the school.

"It's all modular and there's lots of surface area in our school," he said. "We would defi-

nitely like to see it expand."

Binder said the initial investment wouldn't likely be recouped in the first year, but that it's a "long-term investment."

The group is hosting an open house at the school from 10-11 a.m. March 27 at the lyceum.

Waiand hopes the event will help educate people about what the school is trying to do and perhaps attract sponsors.

"We want people to understand how important this is," she said. "It's beneficial to the whole community."