

Phase 5 Gets Injection

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Cochrane High is another step closer to further reducing its environmental footprint.

Lafarge donated \$7,000 and Toyota Evergreen donated \$2,000 to the Sustainable Development Committee bringing the total dollars for the Phase 5 project to \$31,000. The Sustainable Development Committee is now just \$16,000 short of its \$47,000 fundraising goal.

The Phase 5 project includes purchasing a wind turbine, LED lighting, motion and light sensors and eaves troughs. The wind turbine will generate enough power to operate one television.

Exit signs and exterior lights will be lit with LED lights, cafeteria lights will be controlled by motion sensors when the skylights are not generating enough light and storm water collected in the eaves troughs will water the garden.

"It all adds up. Each of our projects have had some sort of impact so I think we're just building up towards more and we're raising awareness for the environment," said Nameeta Sharma, 17, one of the 30 committee members from grades 9 to 12.

In past years, the Sustainable Development Committee has completed four phases, renovating the high school to be more environmentally-friendly.

Phase 1 saw the installation of solar panels that generate two classrooms' worth of power and a residential wind turbine that powers a small laptop that records energy savings at Cochrane High.

Phase 2 included solar panels that run the clock in the gym, while a solar hot water heater and co-generation systems that takes hot air from the boiler room to heat water were part of Phase 3.

Phase 4 was completed last school year with an outdoor garden, composting for the garden, a recycling system, about a dozen dual-flush toilettes and no idling signs in the school parking lot.

Kaitlyn Teghtmayer, 17, said the way of the future is to build new schools with all the same environmental features the committee is trying to build into Cochrane High now.

"With the toilets we replaced we could only do specific toilets with the structure of the building," said Teghtmayer. "We're proving that if you can (renovate) a school that's 50-years-old, then you can do it to any school."

After she graduates this year, Teghtmayer plans to pursue an environmental science degree because of her involvement with the Sustainable Development Committee.

Hannah Martin, 17, said her involvement with the group has taught her environmentally-conscious lifestyle habits do make a difference.

"We know our actions here they don't just benefit us, they benefit the school community and in benefiting the community we benefit the whole of Cochrane," Martin said.

While there is a chance Phase 5 will not get completed before these girls graduate this June, they hope their fundraising efforts and projects continue in the years to come.

"It's shown me that little things matter and all the little things have made some sort of impact," said Sharma. "We really need to be doing this because if you look around us global warming, the environment's a big aspect of today."