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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COALITION FOR ADEQUATE SCHOOL HOUSING

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Message From The Chair



Pamela T. Johnson, C.A.S.H. Chair

Reflecting on C.A.S.H.'s Success


At our recent Spring Conference, C.A.S.H. Immediate Past Chair Eric J. Hall, reminded us that as C.A.S.H. pursues its goals, sometimes the temptation is to focus on what we have not yet achieved rather than what we have and that our recent achievements have been significant. Given Eric's observation, I thought it would be a good time to reflect on what C.A.S.H. has achieved so far in 2006.

First and foremost, a \$10.4 billion school bond on the November 2006 ballot represents a major win for C.A.S.H. Our organization has participated in the school bond negotiations since they began, and through our advocacy efforts, C.A.S.H. was able to convince legislators, the Administration and key state agencies that a school bond was necessary. This achievement was even more significant because New Construction funding is still available from Proposition 55.

C.A.S.H. also advocated for increasing the School Facility Program (SFP)

grant levels to correct the conversion deficiency between the Lease-Purchase Program and SB 50, as well as to address the increased costs of raw materials such as concrete and steel. While we didn't get to the level of increase we had proposed, the school bond does include a 4% SFP grant increase for high schools and a 7% increase for elementary and middle schools. In addition, C.A.S.H. successfully advocated for the State Allocation Board to have the authority to adjust SFP grants to address "general site development" and to review costs of building and modernizing schools.

Regarding legislation, in response to concerns expressed by our members, the C.A.S.H. Legislative Advisory Committee, under the leadership of Nina Boyd and the C.A.S.H. Board of Directors, developed a list of core legislative priorities which has served as a blueprint for C.A.S.H.'s advocacy efforts. C.A.S.H. has been particularly successful in the legislative arena, as each of our identified legislative priorities is currently addressed in a bill sponsored by C.A.S.H.

There is still much work for C.A.S.H. to do in 2006. We must raise funds and garner support to ensure that the school bond is approved in November, and we must work with the Legislature and the Governor to continue to achieve our legislative priorities. Nevertheless, I wanted to recognize that it is not often that C.A.S.H. has had this degree of success on matters so critical to the C.A.S.H. organization. Hats off to our C.A.S.H. Board of Directors, the C.A.S.H. Legislative Advisory Committee, our C.A.S.H. advocacy team, and most of all, hats off to our members who continue to be the source of C.A.S.H.'s success. 



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The CASH Register is published eleven times a year (January through November) by the Coalition for Adequate School Housing (C.A.S.H.) and distributed to C.A.S.H. members. Over 1,000 rapidly growing school districts, county offices of education, architects, attorneys, bond counsel, financial institutions, developers, contractors, consultants, inspectors, licensed professionals, manufacturers of portable classrooms, maintenance suppliers and others who are concerned about school construction issues hold C.A.S.H. memberships.

The CASH Register solicits articles on school facility-related topics from the membership. If you are interested in submitting an article, please send it or a letter of inquiry to: Editor, CASH Register editorial office, 1130 K Street - Suite 210, Sacramento, CA 95814. Sorry, we are unable to return or acknowledge unpublished manuscripts. The views expressed herein are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Coalition for Adequate School Housing, its board, staff or general membership.

The Governor's Budget May Revision

The Governor's Budget May Revision proposes an additional \$2.8 billion for schools in 2006-07. This is comprised of \$2 billion for 2005-06 one-time purposes that will be allocated in 2006-07 (the budget year) and \$800 million on top of what had been proposed in the budget year.

The combination of the original budget's \$3.7 billion and the May Revision's \$2.8 billion is \$6.5 billion in new funding to schools that will be received during the 2006-07 year.

Additionally, \$3.2 billion in settle-up funds will be provided to schools during the next seven years for the purpose of meeting the court settlement in the litigation brought against Governor Schwarzenegger. This litigation argued that the Governor should not have suspended more than \$2 billion from the Proposition 98 guarantee in the 2003-04 fiscal year. There are two ways of addressing these new revenues:

1) The May Revision proposes ongoing revenue increases from the budget as signed in 2005-06; this ongoing funding increase in 2006-07 is \$4.47 billion. Most of the ongoing funds will be used for discretionary funding purposes.

2) The May Revision also proposes settle-up funds which are one-time appropriations of the money owed to schools for the minimum guarantee in 2005-06. Because of the booming economy, the current-year minimum guarantee has increased by approximately \$2 billion. Those funds will be appropriated for one-time purposes. Most of the one-time funds are proposed for categorical purposes.

Table C, to the right, shows the discretionary revenues to schools as proposed in the May Revision. The ongoing discretionary revenues represent an approximately 8% increase per pupil. This is comprised of approximately 6% for revenue limit COLA, 1% for deficit buyout, and 1% for

revenue limit equalization. The COLA is also extended to categorical programs at the 5.92 level.

The Proposition 98 Ongoing Funding chart (Table A below) shows the combination of the January Budget and the May Revision for new pro-

posed Proposition 98 Ongoing Spending.


Additionally, the budget as amended by the May Revision proposes more than \$2 billion in one-time funding. See Table B below for the proposed one-time expenditures. 

Table A

98 Ongoing Spending (in millions)

Summary of Major Programs in Addition to COLA

K-12	
Revenue limit equalization	\$317.8
Revenue limit deficit-factor reduction	\$308.6
Counselors	\$200
Mandates	\$133.4
Arts and music block grant	\$166
Teacher recruitment and retention	\$100
Physical education	\$ 85
Beginning teacher support	\$ 65
Preschool expansion	\$ 50
CAHSEE supplemental assistance	\$ 50.5
School meal increase	\$ 37.8

Table B

One-Time Expenditures (in millions)

Summary of Major Programs

Mandates	\$959
Classroom supplies	\$400
Instructional materials	\$250
Physical education equipment	\$250
Art and music equipment	\$250
Emergency repairs (<i>Williams</i>)	\$137
Library materials	\$ 75
Preschool revolving loan fund	\$ 50

Table C

Discretionary Revenues – Per ADA

	COLA Increase	Deficit Buy-out	Equalization* (Average)	Total Increase
Elementary	\$295	\$50	\$50	\$395
High School	\$354	\$60	\$60	\$474
Unified	\$305	\$52	\$52	\$409

**The amount will be different for each district, but this is an average.*

Contributors to the 2006 Statewide Bond Campaign

(As of May 31, 2006)

The C.A.S.H. Board of Directors thanks the following members who have made generous contributions to our fundraising efforts for the 2006 Statewide School Bond Campaign. The Board encourages all members to make a generous contribution to our efforts. If you or your firm would like to make a contribution, please visit the C.A.S.H. web site at www.cashnet.org for a contribution form.

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Spring Conference Review

This year's Spring Conference, held at the Westin Horton Plaza in Downtown San Diego, kicked off with a preconference workshop entitled "Whatever Happened To?" Nina Boyd, Orange County Department of Education and C.A.S.H. Legislative Advisory Committee Chair, moderated the workshop which drew over 80 participants and updated attendees on the status of several critical school facilities topics. C.A.S.H. Legislative Advocate Tom Duffy reviewed major facilities-related legislation currently under discussion by the Legislature. C.A.S.H. Board Member Jim Bush, School Site Solutions, reviewed the C.A.S.H. Environmental Working Group's activities and discussions they have had with the Department of Toxic Substances Control. Tom Rayburn, Capistrano Unified School District, shared the new developments in the *Williams* settlement, which included the possibility of the program being funded in advance as opposed to a reimbursement program.

The workshop also addressed emerging issues that will have a significant impact on school facilities

throughout the State. C.A.S.H. Legislative Advocate David Walrath reviewed the recent May Revision to the Governor's Budget and the state bond measure that had just been approved by the Legislature. Nina Boyd reviewed the Preschool for All Initiative and the discussions C.A.S.H. leadership has

been having with the Preschool for All Initiative leadership, especially regarding the impact the passage of this proposition will have on school facilities.

In addition, Murdoch Walrath & Holmes Legislative Analyst, Paul Holmes, gave a presentation on K-12
Continued on page 6



Double Diamond Contributors back row (l to r) Jeffrey Baratta, UBS Securities, LLC; Pamela T. Johnson, C.A.S.H. Chair; David Ruhnau, Ruhnau Ruhnau Clarke. Front row (l to r) Glynnna Hoekstra, barnhart, inc.; Richard Nowicki, NTDSTICHLER Architects; Jon Mills, LPA, Inc.; Gene Hartline, California Financial Services; Jim Kisel, LPA, Inc.; Patrick Prado, KPI Architects; Steve Riggs, Bernards; Bill Meehleis, Meehleis Modular Buildings; Ian Padilla, Murdoch Walrath & Holmes; Mark Friesz, Virco Mfg. Corp.; Randy Peterson, HMC Architects; Ron Pregmon, WLC Architects, Inc.



(l to r) Tom Duffy, C.A.S.H., Paul Holmes, Murdoch Walrath & Holmes, Nina Boyd, Orange County Department of Education, Dave Walrath, Murdoch Walrath & Holmes, Tom Rayburn, Capistrano USD. Not Pictured (Jim Bush, School Site Solutions, Inc.)



Luisa Park, Office of Public School Construction, Pamela T. Johnson, C.A.S.H. Chair, Montebello USD, Lori Morgan, Office of Public School Construction, Mavonne Garrity, State Allocation Board

demographics, describing where we have been, where we are, and where we are going.

The official start to the conference was Tuesday, May 16 with welcome and introductions by C.A.S.H. Chair, Pamela T. Johnson. Moderating the morning general session was C.A.S.H. Board Member, Kenn Young, Riverside County Office of Education. Insightful presentations were given by Luisa Park, Executive Officer, and Lori Morgan, Deputy Executive Officer of the Office of Public School Construction, and Mavonne Garrity, Assistant Executive Officer of the State Allocation Board.

Next on the agenda was a panel discussion on Bidding and Contracting presented by Ed Mierau, Neff Construction, Charlene Yarnall, PJHM Archi-

itects, Inc., and Teri Jones, Sundt Construction. Later in the afternoon attendees participated in more in-depth breakout sessions on bidding and contracting issues. These breakouts were highly rated and were lauded as one of the best parts of the conference. The breakouts and presenters were as follows:

Preparing Bid Documents

Moderator: Lynn Halfhide, Capital Program Management, Inc.
Teri Jones, Sundt Construction
Mikal Nicholls, Sweetwater Un. HSD
Mark Williams, Atkinson-Andelson-Loya-Ruud & Romo

Opening and Awarding Bids and Resolving Bid Protests

Moderator: Kathy Tanner, San Marcos USD

Ed Mierau, Neff Construction
Mark Kelley, Miller Brown & Dannis
Chris Taylor, HMC Architects
Don Lussier, Corona-Norco USD

Contract Changes and Close-Out

Moderator: Stephen Newsom, LPA, Inc.
Charlene Yarnall, PJHM Architects, Inc.
Roland Skumawitz, Romoland Elem. SD
Terry Tao, Atkinson-Andelson-Loya-Ruud & Romo

Guy Mehula of the Los Angeles USD gave a School District Case Study on the Los Angeles Unified School District's construction program. This was a well received presentation by conference attendees.

During lunch, Pamela T. Johnson recognized and thanked the Double



(l to r) Ed Mierau, Neff Construction, Charlene Yarnall, PJHM Architects, Inc., Kenn Young, Riverside County Office of Education, Teri Jones, Sundt Construction, Guy Mehula, Los Angeles USD



(l to r) Nancy Sidhu, Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation, Pamela T. Johnson, C.A.S.H. Chair, Montebello USD



(l to r) Mark Williams, Atkinson-Andelson-Loya-Ruud & Romo, Lynn Halfhide, Capital Program Management, Inc., Teri Jones, Sundt Construction, Mikal Nicholls, Sweetwater Un. HSD



(Standing l to r) Kathy Tanner, San Marcos USD, Don Lussier, Corona-Norco USD, (seated l to r) Mark Kelley, Miller Brown & Dannis, Ed Mierau, Neff Construction, Chris Taylor, HMC Architects

Diamond (\$25,000 or higher) 2006 Bond Contributors. For a list of contributors, see page 4. Also at lunch, guest speaker Nancy Sidhu of the Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation gave her usual outstanding update on California's economic outlook.

Tuesday evening attendees enjoyed an outdoor reception. C.A.S.H. thanks the following sponsors for helping to make the Spring Conference a success:

- 3D/I
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- Westberg + White, Architects & Planners
- WLC Architects

On Wednesday morning, attendees enjoyed breakfast as Tom Duffy, C.A.S.H. Legislative Advocate, gave a brief update on legislation and the 2006 school bond.

The general session continued and was moderated by C.A.S.H. Board Member, William Savidge, West Contra Costa USD.

First on the agenda was a presentation by Tim Gage of Blue Sky Consulting Group on the C.A.S.H. Locally Funded Requirements Study results.


Next up were very informative state agency updates as follows:

- CDE/School Facilities Planning Division Update given by Kathleen Moore, Director, and Fred Yeager, Assistant Director.
- Division of the State Architect Update given by David Thorman, AIA, State Architect.
- Department of Toxic Substances Control Update given by Hamid Saebfar, Division Chief.

William Savidge then took to the podium to give an update on the C.A.S.H. School Facilities Leadership Academy.

The session ended with a presentation by C.A.S.H. Immediate Past Chair, Eric J. Hall, San Dieguito Un. HSD, on Californians for School Facilities.

C.A.S.H. thanks all of the presenters who made this conference a success. For copies of handouts, please visit the C.A.S.H. website at www.cashnet.org.

Be sure to mark your calendars for next year's Pre Conference Workshop and Spring Conference, which will be held May 14 - 16, 2007, at the Westin Horton Plaza in San Diego. 

- C.A.S.H. Staff



(l to r) Terry Tao, Atkinson-Andelson-Loya-Ruud & Romo, Roland Skumawitz, Romoland Elem. SD, Charlene Yarnall, PJHM Architects, Inc., Stephen Newsom, LPA, Inc.



(l to r) William Savidge, West Contra Costa USD, Kathleen Moore, CDE/School Facilities Planning Division, Fred Yeager, CDE/School Facilities Planning Division, Eric Hall, San Dieguito Un. HSD, Hamid Saebfar, Department of Toxic Substances Control. Not pictured: Tim Gage, Blue Sky Consulting Group, David Thorman, Division of the State Architect

Appropriations Committees Review School Facility Bills

The Appropriations Committees met on Thursday, May 25 to complete their reviews of bills with fiscal impacts before the June 2nd deadline to review or hold bills before they head to the other house. A clear pattern emerged in the Assembly Appropriations Committee with regard to school facilities legislation as the Committee began to review education bills. Specifically, bills proposing significant policy changes to the existing School Facility Program (SFP) process were either held in Committee (effectively killing them for the current legislative session) or were amended significantly.

The unstated policy appeared to be that only legislation related to the November school bond, either clarifying particular new programs or deferring to policy contained in the bond language, was approved by the Committee. Bills that proposed to expand SFP eligibility and provide funding to assist with ADA compliance, seismic safety upgrades, minimum essential facilities and other major policy proposals, were for the most part held in the Committee. The exception to this pattern was bills that were narrowly crafted to address district-specific facility needs.

The following is a summary of the specific actions taken by the Assembly and Senate Appropriations Committees. We will provide updates on other legislation that C.A.S.H. is following as actions occur.

Bond Clean-Up

AB 1846 (Berg) – Minimum Essential Facilities

AB 1846 would have established the *Minimum Essential School Facilities*

Program under the current School Facility Program with a maximum funding allocation of \$100 million from the 2006 statewide school bond. The bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee because of concerns that it would put too much pressure on bond funds immediately and into the future.

AB 1934 (Hancock) – Seismic Safety and Reconstruction

AB 1934 was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. The Committee analysis mistakenly reported that the potential cost of this C.A.S.H.-sponsored legislation to deal with AB 300 facilities would be upwards of \$3 billion. Please note that AB 127 (Chapter 35, Statutes of 2006), which places the 2006 statewide education facilities bond bill on the November 2006 ballot, has provisions for seismic safety mitigation and reconstruction work necessary to address AB 300 facilities.

AB 2045 (Parra) – Minimum Essential Facilities

AB 2045 (Parra) also addresses the need for minimum essential facilities by allowing the State Allocation Board to provide a supplemental grant to districts for that purpose. The bill also contained provisions redefining requirements for Financial Hardship. The bill passed out of the Assembly Appropriations Committee, with Republican abstention; however, the Committee amended the bill to cap the supplemental grant to 5% (rather than 10%) and to delete the Financial Hardship provisions.

Regulatory

AB 2149 (McCarthy) – Supplemental Grant, Access Compliance

AB 2149 would have authorized the State Allocation Board to provide a supplemental grant to modernization projects to assist with costs associated with access compliance. The bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee because the matter is being addressed administratively by the State Allocation Board.

Note: At the May 24 State Allocation Board meeting, the OPSC presented a report to the Board on the cost analysis performed by the Division of the State Architect on the issue of access compliance. Though the Board has not adopted a supplemental grant, it is generally believed that a grant supplement is needed and the legal parameters of providing one administratively are being considered.

Eligibility

The following two bills passed out of the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 2783 (Umberg) – MTYRE/Concept 6, Existing Building Capacity

AB 2783 would allow school districts operating multi-track year-round, double-session schools or Concept 6 Program schools to subtract 30% of the existing building capacity of those schools from its ongoing New Construction eligibility. The provision sunsets on January 1, 2010. There are at most two or three school districts statewide that meet the requirements of AB 2783.

AB 2947 (Goldberg) – SELPA Transfers, Existing Building Capacity

AB 2947 would require the recalculation of a district's or county office of education's existing building capacity upon the transfer of a special education program.

District Specific

AB 1895 (Coto) –

Surplus Property

AB 1895 would allow the Oak Grove Elementary School to use the proceeds from the sale of surplus property for any one-time general fund need District until January 1, 2010. Because the bill is specific to one district, the bill passed out of the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

Miscellaneous


AB 2148 (McCarthy) – Supplemental Grant, Project Management

AB 2148 would allow a school district to request and the State Allocation Board to allocate a supplemental grant to assist with costs associated with project management. The bill passed out of the Assembly Appropriations Committee with a unanimous vote; however, it was amended to cap the apportionment at 5% and to delete provisions relating to design-build.

AB 2951 (Goldberg) – Capital Facilities Fees

AB 2951 would give municipal utilities the unilateral ability to impose fees on public agencies, including school districts, to cover the cost of building, modernizing and renovating utility facilities. The bill passed out of the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

SB 1814 (Torlakson) – CEQA

SB 1814 would explicitly allow school districts to prepare Master EIRs. Additionally, the bill clarifies existing law that allows bond funds to be used for planning purposes including CEQA. The bill passed out of the Senate Appropriations Committee with 10 aye votes (two Republicans) and three no votes (all Republican). 

California Supreme Court Hears Oral Argument on City Of Marina Case


On May 2, 2006, the California Supreme Court heard oral argument on a case that may have significant financial impacts on California school districts. The California Court of Appeal decision *City of Marina v. Board of Trustees of the California State University* (June 17, 2003) 109 Cal.App.4th 1179, which is on appeal to the California Supreme Court, determined that public education entities are prohibited from paying regional traffic impact fees, even on a voluntary basis. The appellate court affirmed that public education entities may spend public funds only for capital facility charges specifically authorized by law. The appellate court also held that public educational agencies may not spend funds for mitigation measures unless they forward their public education purpose. The California Supreme Court's determination of this appeal will potentially affect all California school districts, community colleges and universities that construct school facilities.

The California State University invited C.A.S.H. to submit an amicus brief to the California Supreme Court since CSU and school districts have

shared interests on issues raised in this case. In April 2004, on behalf of C.A.S.H., Miller Brown and Dannis filed an amicus brief with the California Supreme Court.


Marilyn Cleveland and Chad Graff of Miller Brown and Dannis attended the oral argument for C.A.S.H. and conferred with counsel arguing the case for CSU. They reported that the case was well argued by both sides and that the California Supreme Court Justices limited their questioning primarily to the following issues: whether CSU could legally and/or voluntarily request funds from the Legislature to mitigate regional impacts, whether CEQA or the Fort Ord Reuse Authority could require that CSU contribute to mitigation outside its jurisdiction, and the impact of regional mitigation measures on public projects.

The California Supreme Court is now expected to issue a decision on this case within 90 days.

For more information, please refer to the November/December 2004 *CASH Register* for an article discussing the case or to the link to C.A.S.H.'s amicus brief at www.mbdllaw.com. 

Changes to Emergency Repair Fund Proposed

In the Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Education on May 23, the Department of Finance stated their willingness to change the *Williams* Emergency Repair Program from a reimbursement program to a program that would advance funds to eligible school districts. While the Department of Finance did not provide detail, they were very clear in their intent to move away from a reimbursement program.

This is a significant step for those school districts that are subject to the provisions of the *Williams* court settlement regarding keeping their schools in good repair. 

Legislative Advisory Committee Seeking Nominations

The C.A.S.H. Board of Directors Nominating Committee is now accepting nominations for the Legislative Advisory Committee. The Committee has openings for six (6) members.

The Board Policy for the Legislative Advisory Committee states that the C.A.S.H. Board of Directors Nominating Committee shall solicit names from the general C.A.S.H. membership and present a slate of candidates to the C.A.S.H. Board of Directors.

Nominees must possess the following qualifications:

- ▶ School District/Company is a member of C.A.S.H. in good standing;
- ▶ Nominee is involved in school facility planning and/or management; and
- ▶ Nominee attends C.A.S.H. meetings, conferences and workshops on a regular basis.

Legislative Advisory Committee members serve a two-year term with an opportunity to extend their service by an additional two years. Committee member terms begin on September 1 and end on August 30.

C.A.S.H. makes every effort to keep a balance on the Legislative Advisory Committee reflecting different geographical locations, private-and-public sector interests, and other related factors.

Letters of interest or nomination should include the following:

- ▶ Name, position, address and phone number of the candidate;
- ▶ Nominee's experience and background in school facility planning or management;
- ▶ Any involvement in C.A.S.H. conferences, committees and activities; and
- ▶ Reasons this individual would make a good committee member and what contributions this candidate would make to C.A.S.H.

If you are a member of C.A.S.H. and are interested in serving on the Legislative Advisory Committee or know someone who would make an excellent candidate for this Committee, please forward the requested information to:

Eric J. Hall
C.A.S.H. Nominating Committee
1130 K Street, Suite 210
Sacramento, CA 95814
Attention: Patti Herrera

Filing Deadline: Friday, June 16, 2006

- C.A.S.H. Staff

Sycamore Ridge Elementary School

Situated in the Pacific Highlands Ranch area of Carmel Valley, Sycamore Ridge Elementary School serves the communities of Costa del Sol, Seabreeze, Bordeaux, Bougainvillea,

interior courtyard in the center. The Administration area controls access to the campus. The buildings are surrounded by Tuscan columns and feature custom, hand-painted, mission-style

square feet and have a small built-in kitchen and a large covered outdoor eating area.

The school was designed by Trittipio & Associates and construction management services were provided by Barnhart, Inc. The school features a unique “construction teaching wall.” The wall is a plexiglass-covered cutout in the hallway that allows students to see the inner construction of their school and essentially how it all goes together. The cutout is intact with framing, insulation, conduit wiring, switch plates, and hold-downs. The conduits are even shaved back so the students can see all the wiring inside. This idea allows students to learn how some of the systems in their school work and what is “behind the walls.”

Dedication ceremonies were held for the school district on September 16, 2005. The youngest and oldest Sycamore Ridge students assisted the school’s principal in the ceremonial



Windwood Apartments and Villa Andalusia Apartments. Until recently, the area consisted of tomato fields and undeveloped land, but the burgeoning Carmel Valley community anticipates an additional 4,000 residences over the next two decades.


The \$18 million school totals 67,000 square feet on an 11-useable-acre site of wood-framed buildings on Old Carmel Valley Road. Sycamore Ridge School features an administration building with an outdoor eating area for teachers, library, multipurpose/art/music building, 35 classrooms, science and computer labs and the largest parking lot in the District equipped with parent-run valet service. Each pair of classrooms is connected with a “quiet room” for small group instruction.

The design is a cloister-style campus with direct access to active play areas around the building and a quieter

tiles by a renowned tile artist. His résumé includes numerous celebrity homes and high-profile Vegas casinos. Also included are a 2.5 story clock tower and an amphitheater off the rear of the stage. The amphitheater is covered with a number of “sail” shaped shade structures and provides a feel for the surrounding Pacific Highlands Ranch community.

There are also two connected child care buildings on the site that provide after-school child care for students. These buildings encompass 2,900



cutting of the ribbon, and the school band performed their “Stallion Stomp.” Sycamore Ridge marks the District’s seventh elementary school and will be able to serve approximately 650 students. 

Solar School – Escondido Elementary

By Carole Pharr

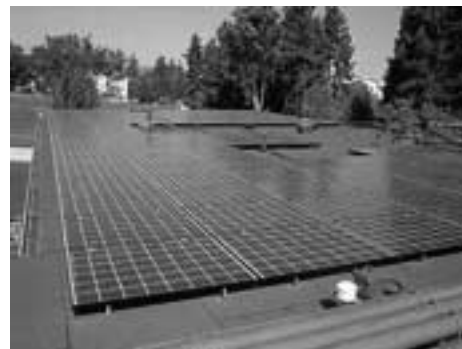
Escondido Elementary School in the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) starts each day the same as many other schools. The staff and teachers arrive and lights, computers, coffee pots, and other electrical appliances are turned on. Students arrive for the day and fill up the classrooms. But as the sun climbs into the sky, one thing is very different: the electric meter recording the power used by the school begins to slow down instead of speeding up as more electrical loads are turned on. This is not your ordinary school. It is host to a small power plant generating electricity from the sun.

In February 2006, the Escondido Elementary School community celebrated the start-up of its own 20,000 watt photovoltaic (PV) solar electric power generating system. Converting sunlight directly into electricity, the system will provide an estimated 16% of the school's electric power needs, a savings of \$6,000 per year in electric bills. In addition, this system has become a great educational tool for teaching the students in the school district about solar energy.

The PV system operates by using photovoltaic panels to convert sunlight to direct current electricity. This direct current (DC) power is converted to the 120 volt alternating current (AC) power needed to operate the school's electrical system using an AC inverter. The power from the AC inverter will power the electrical loads in the school. If the amount of power the system is generating is greater than the load available in the school, the excess is sent out to the electric utility company (PG&E), which effectively runs the school's electric meter backward and creates a credit with the utility. The system is monitored, and the output is displayed through an internet website and a flat screen display in the window of the principal's office for everyone to see and

follow. The output can be seen at the website www.salasobrien.com, which links the Fat Spaniel web-based monitoring system.

The school chose this project in part due to the higher cost of electricity they were paying compared to other schools in the district. The system was originally estimated to cost \$247,000, which was significantly reduced by a \$128,000 rebate from the California Energy Commission for photovoltaic power




generation, leaving the school district with \$119,000 to pay. The Sustainable Schools Committee, chaired by local environmentalist, Walt Hays, and made up of school district staff, City of Palo Alto Utilities, Salas O'Brien Engineers, parents, teachers, Board and community members, persuaded the school district to build the system. To further encourage the school district, the Sustainable Schools Committee agreed to raise money to fund the system. A generous matching grant from the Morgan Family Foundation and \$25,000 raised through community donations allowed the Sustainable

Schools Committee to meet their fundraising goals.

Palo Alto Green, a partnership program between Three Phases Energy and the City of Palo Alto Utilities, which supports renewable power use in the City of Palo Alto, agreed to offer renewable energy credit for energy produced by the school. This credit will pay the school district \$2,000 every year for the next five years that the system operates in exchange for particular publishing rights to the system.

The system was built by Eco-Energies (now Renewable Energy Concepts, Inc.) and designed by Salas O'Brien Engineers, Inc., the school district's energy consultant.

The PAUSD is also piloting an "energy patrol" program to raise student awareness of energy and resources consumption and the changes in behavior that can "make a difference." The program is spearheaded by Jerry Mantranga, Assistant Business Superintendent of Palo Alto Unified School District, and supported by principals and staff at the District. Palo Alto is doing great things to integrate energy and curriculum for the students. 

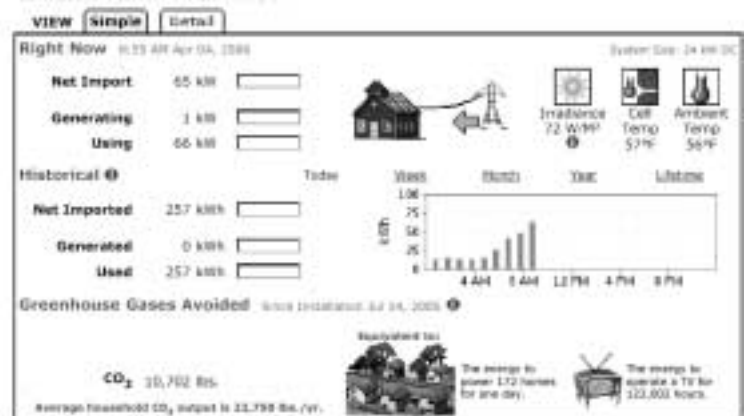
Carole Pharr is with C.A.S.H. member Salas O'Brien Engineers Inc. in San Jose, California.



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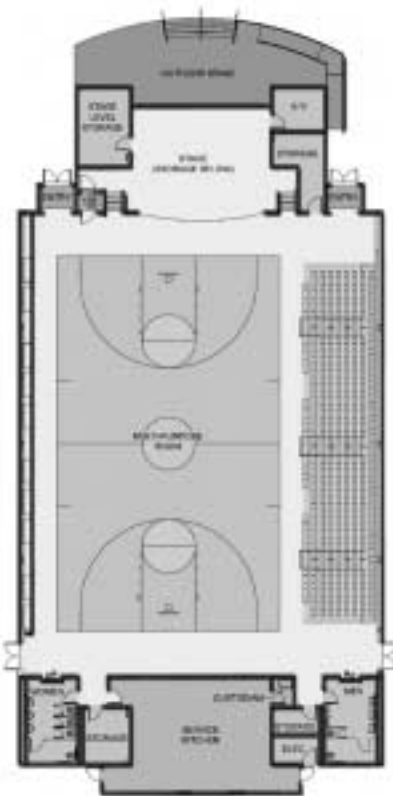
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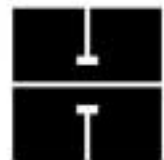
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