

Solar power to supplement Clovis facilities

Business Journal Wed., March 23, 2011

A few Clovis fire stations will soon be sun-powered following the City Council's approval yesterday to install three solar systems totaling 385 kilowatts of energy capacity.

A \$3.4 million contract with Compass Energy Solutions will see to a 337 kW system installed at the City's Public Safety Facility, which house the police and fire headquarters, and a 30 kW system at both Fire Station No. 1 and Fire Station No. 5, all rated to last for 25 years.

Construction is slated to begin April 15 on the project and work will wrap up some time in August. The city looks to save 47% in annual electricity costs, or \$128,205, at the facilities, while reducing energy usage by 693 kilowatt-hours (kWh). Rebates of from the California Solar Initiative are estimated at \$520,000.

The project is being made possible through a \$2.45 million loan from the Municipal Finance Corporation, an organization who specializes in tax-exempt financings for public agencies and another \$953,000 from the California Energy Commission.

College students opt for an alternative energy spring break

Staff Reports

Turlock Journal, Wed., March 23, 2011

More than 50 college students are passing up the beach this spring break and instead helping the Merced County Fairgrounds become more energy efficient.

Student volunteers from UC Merced and other UC campuses in the California Public Interest Research Group (CALPIRG) Energy Service Corps will be changing hundreds of light bulbs at the Merced County Fair fairgrounds today as part of a five-day "Alternative Energy Spring Break" event.

They will swap old incandescent light bulbs for more energy efficient, compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) and install weather stripping in the fairgrounds' Pavilion and Administration buildings.

The project is part of the program's goal to slash energy usage by more than 30 percent, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and cut down on pollution. The Energy Service Corps is a joint program of CALPIRG and AmeriCorps. It is being run on 14 university and community college campuses across the state to encourage over 30,000 Californians to reduce their energy use, save money on their utility bills and reduce their environmental pollution. The program also plans to perform 4,000 free home energy surveys to give residents and tenants energy-saving recommendations.

The Merced County Fair fairgrounds buildings were selected for the energy upgrade because, "The fairgrounds is an important community institution, not only because of its history, but because it continues to play a big role in community life," said Danielle Lauber, the UC Merced Energy Service Corps Campus Organizer.

"With the state budget cuts fairs are facing, we can't afford to make these kinds of improvements," said Tom Musser, the fair's CEO. "Partnering with the Energy Service Corps volunteers will reduce our energy use and that will help the environment and save us money. It's a great community partnership."

Volunteers from UC Merced's Energy Service Corps have completed weatherization projects to improve energy efficiency and reduce energy consumption at two older Merced buildings, the Merced Elks Lodge and the Merced Rescue Mission.

Judge suspends Calif.'s 'cap and trade' program

in the Stockton Record, Wed., March 23, 2011

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A judge has temporarily halted California's ambitious program to provide financial incentives for the state's largest polluters to cut harmful greenhouse gas emissions.

San Francisco Superior Court Judge Ernest Goldsmith said Monday the state failed to properly consider alternatives to its so-called "cap-and-trade" program, a key piece of its landmark global warming law, AB32.

Goldsmith ruled that the failure to consider alternatives violated state environmental law, so the California Air Resources Board must conduct further review before implementing the plan.

The board adopted the plan in December.

The legal challenge was brought by environmental groups, who argue the program allows polluters who are primarily located in poor neighborhoods to continue polluting by buying "carbon credits" from projects located elsewhere.

[Fresno Bee Earth Blog, Tues., March 22, 2011:](#)

Free seminar Saturday in Fresno for diesel truckers

By Mark Grossi

Diesel truckers are invited to Fresno City Hall on Saturday to learn more about new state air quality rules that will directly affect their businesses.

The free seminar, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 2600 Fresno St., will feature presentations on regulations and requirements for drayage trucks, buses, transportation refrigeration units and tractor-trailer aerodynamics.

There will be vendor displays and information on financial assistance. The seminar is put on by the California Air Resources Board.

There's some background on it at [this site](#).

[Fresno Bee commentary, Wed., March 23, 2011:](#)

Addressing state's environmental concerns

By Lisa Jackson

On my visit to California this week, many people have offered thoughts and prayers for Japan and the earthquake and tsunami victims now facing threats from radiation. Many have also voiced concerns about radiation reaching the United States.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and our federal partners are closely monitoring radiation levels and ensuring that all steps are taken to safeguard health, and we will continue to work closely with state and local officials and regularly update the public.

Our extensive network of radiation monitors has detected no levels of concern for Californians or anyone on the West Coast, and my visit to California reflects my personal confidence in the safety of the air and EPA's monitoring of the situation.

I am in Fresno today to meet with farmers, ranchers and community leaders to continue our work together to safeguard health, strengthen the economy and protect vital natural resources. Agriculture, more than any other sector, relies on clean air, clear water and healthy land to create jobs and drive economic growth in California.

Over the past year, I and other senior EPA officials have met with hundreds of farmers and ranchers across the country. Communication, transparency and open dialogue are essential to reducing pollution in the air and water and ensuring the health of farming communities.

One example is the resource conservation work here in the Valley, which is considered among the best in the country. Developed in collaboration between growers, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the local air district and the EPA, these cost-effective practices can be tailored to individual farms.

Using USDA conservation funding, the Valley is developing the first program in the country to encourage growers to replace old tractors with new, cleaner tractors.

Through this region, California leads a nationwide agriculture industry that has rapidly increased output, efficiency and innovation in recent decades. Your innovations have made it possible for my family to eat fresh California produce at our home outside of Washington, D.C., more than 2,800 miles away.

But as many rural communities have found, improvements in productivity and efficiency come with their own challenges, namely issues of health and environmental sustainability.

One of those issues is water quality. To protect Valley residents' drinking water, which is primarily supplied from groundwater sources, the EPA is providing technical support to local water suppliers.

We are also supporting a partnership with the state to restore the San Joaquin River, with the goal of restoring vibrant community life along the river and providing reliable water supplies for growers.

Residents here also want and deserve clean air to breathe. The community is stepping up and building partnerships to cut pollution, but the Valley's local emissions, combined with its unique terrain and wind patterns, have created significant clean air challenges.

Childhood asthma rates are higher here than in most of California, and the state Air Resources Board predicts that 2,400 people die each year from exposure to fine particulate matter in the Valley.

These are challenges I will be discussing with local farmers today. Open dialogue provides the insights we need to craft the most cost-effective protections of human health. It also helps dispel common myths, like the false claim that EPA is expanding regulation of dust from farms. We have made no decision to do so.

The Clean Air Act mandates regular reviews of science on various pollutants, including coarse particulate matter. An independent panel is currently assessing that science, and at my direction EPA staff is meeting with farmers and ranchers about their concerns and the status of our review.

Clean air, land and water are essential to the health of the people living here and to the agricultural industry that creates jobs and drives economic activity. These are values we all share, and it is from these conversations that we will work toward solutions that benefit your health, your environment and your economy

Lisa Jackson is administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

[Mercury News editorial, Wed., March 23, 2011:](#)

Lawsuit must not derail California's global warming law

California's first-in-the-nation global warming law, AB32, is in jeopardy following a San Francisco Superior Court ruling last week. The setback can't be allowed to derail the legislation aimed at cutting greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 and making California more energy efficient.

Judge Ernest Goldsmith told the California Air Resources Board to more thoroughly analyze alternatives to the cap-and-trade program it adopted last year to reach the goals of AB32. The state may appeal his ruling, but in the meantime, the air board must be allowed to continue its work toward implementing the law next year.

Goldsmith did not concede the plaintiffs' primary contention, which is that trading pollution credits -- the essence of cap-and-trade -- could result in more emissions in disadvantaged communities. He only said that the board must conduct an environmental review of other options, such as a carbon tax, and allow public comment.

All of that will take time. So other aspects of the law must be allowed to proceed, including its low-carbon fuel standard and the requirement that utilities get a third of their electricity from renewable sources.

The judge is likely to base his final ruling on the proposed remedies to be submitted soon by the plaintiffs, a group of environmental nonprofits. Their proposals must make it clear that they don't want to stop overall implementation of AB32. That would be bad for all Californians, including those this lawsuit seeks to protect.

AB32 will help reduce pollution across the state, and air pollution knows no boundaries. The law also will create good jobs in the clean-energy sector, and nothing would help disadvantaged communities more than good jobs. It should be possible to guard against negative effects on these communities without crippling this landmark law.