
Department of Energy

Arizona Teachers Prepare Students for Green Economy

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Using a curriculum they hope to spread across the United States, two Arizona high school teachers are giving their students hands-on experience in renewable energy jobs.

Students led by Kevin English, a building trades teacher at Raymond S. Kellis High School in Glendale, Ariz., are wiring parts of the school for solar power. Kevin's colleague, marketing teacher Deb Moore, has her students learning about environmentally friendly marketing and planning a Green Fair. The two teachers are also helping to launch the Green Clubs of America, an educational nonprofit seeking to spread their curriculum to other schools and encourage students to consider renewable energy careers.

Kevin wrote his own renewable-energy curriculum after realizing that the conventional curriculum prepared students for construction jobs that are disappearing. It introduces students to renewable energy topics such as solar, wind and geothermal power, as well as weatherization for energy efficiency.

"We've done electrical circuits, putting in solar panels, connecting them to inverters and charge controllers like they'd do on a home," Kevin says. "We're going to do the same with a wind turbine."

But the students' flagship project is the installation of photovoltaic panels in two parts of campus, funded by a \$15,000 grant from the Earth Day Network. Two 175-watt panels on poles in an open area of the campus will provide lighting and power for outdoor events, and another series of 10 175-watt panels will power a student store. Kevin expects demand for these types of energy sources to spike, and he wants his students to be ready.

One senior student is eager to take on those challenges before he graduates. He says an understanding of green energy issue gives him hope for the world's future as well as his own.

"At first, I hardly knew anything about alternative energy, let alone wanted a career in it, but after three months in this class, my mind has changed. I see my future in the Green Business Management field because of the leadership skills I have learned in the class," he says. "Honestly, I am very excited for the solar project at our school."

Deb's marketing students are raising environmental awareness through events such as the Green Fair, and they are considering issues other conservation issues in the community. In a twist on a common science-fair project, Deb's students have figure out how to do things such as package an egg so it won't break when it drops – using all sustainable materials.

"[We're] trying to create this next generation of kids that are looking at green issues throughout the curriculum and throughout the stages of their lives, as business owners," she says.

What does this mean for me?

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