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Huseyin Sarper

Good day sunshine

CSU-Pueblo plans to light building with solar help

**By GAYLE PEREZ
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN**

Colorado State University-Pueblo is planning to take advantage of the bright sunny skies familiar to Pueblo to help provide energy for at least one of its buildings on campus.

CSU-Pueblo, in collaboration with EcoSol/EcoStruct and Smart Growth Advocates of Pueblo, is in the process of having a photovoltaic solar energy panel installed at the Technology Building.

When the installation is completed, later this spring, it will provide enough energy to supply at least half the building with electricity, according to Huseyin Sarper, a professor of engineering at CSU-Pueblo.



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"This is only going to meet a fraction of this building's needs, but the main idea is that it is going to allow our students to do various studies," Sarper said.

Sarper said students will be able to gain work experience as they regularly calculate, calibrate and measure the system's output and efficiency.

Also, graduate and undergraduate students will be involved in conducting research on all aspects of generating solar electricity through the project.

The solar project will be free-standing photovoltaic panels that have two arrays with a total of 36 modules.

An educational kiosk is planned in the lobby of the Technology Building, explaining the solar-panel process.

The estimated \$90,000 project is being completed with money from CSU-Pueblo, an Aquila rebate and a grant from the Supplemental Environment Program, or SEP.

The SEP offers grants using money that has been collected from environmental violations. In Pueblo, the money is coming from violations that were imposed on Rocky Mountain Steel Mills, now Evraz Group.

Vickie Massam, president of Smart Growth Advocates, said when she learned that there was SEP money available for educational projects, she jumped at the opportunity to bring it to Pueblo.

"No one replied to the mail but me," Massam said.

She said initially she had planned to build the project at the Pueblo Greenway and Nature Center, which already had solar panels installed.

"Then it occurred to me, why not do it at the university," she said.

She was put in contact with Sarper and Hector Carrasco, dean of the College of Engineering, Education and Professional Studies, and the project blossomed.

The solar panels have been designed by EcoSol/EcoStruct which will provide the labor, material and equipment to erect the system.

Eventually, Sarper said the university hopes to arrange field trips for area students to come to view the project and learn more about solar energy.



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Massam added the system is designed in such a way that it can be added to in the future.

"The design of the system makes it expandable," she said. "As technology improves and things change, we can expand and build on it. This is not a flash-in-the-pan type project, it's one that will be ongoing."

Massam said she believes it can be another tool to recruit students to the campus.

"We will think it will be a great recruiting point for the university. We hope to have pictures of it included in all promotional material," she said. "This is the kind of thing young people look for and expect. They expect certain levels of technology and this certainly is where our future is going."

Sarper said the new panels will replace the outdated passive solar structure that was installed years ago at the Technology Building. That solar project was used only to heat water.

"We're trying to do what we can as a university to use renewable energy whenever possible," said Sarper, who recently directed three students who did a master's-degree thesis on renewable energy. "Initially, we thought about setting up the solar panels at the Nature Center."

Sarper said his goal is to continue to have other renewable energy projects come to the campus.

"We'd love to see something like this across the campus," he said. "My hope is to some day have a windmill on campus. We have a master's (degree) thesis that shows that it is economically feasible to do complete wind power out here."

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