

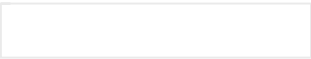
Monday, September 21, 2020 Latest: Supervisors Look to Hurry Western Broadband

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Simpson Middle School Powers Up with Solar Array

2020-09-10 Renss Greene 1 Comment

J. Lupton Simpson Middle School officially unveiled its new solar array Thursday, making it the first school in the division to get most of its energy from the sun.

With new energy-efficient features installed in the school like high-efficiency transformers, LED lighting, automatic dimmers, and additional sealing where heat would previously leak out of the building, Simpson now generates about three-quarters of the energy it does use from the new solar array on the roof.

It's a high-tech leap forward for one of the older schools in the system. But it also depends on the faculty, staff and students inside.

"This was already a fairly high-performing school as far as energy conservation," said Loudoun County Public Schools Director of Facility Services Don Treanor. "They've won [federal energy efficiency rating] ENERGY STAR multiple years in a row even though it's an older building. Their staff does a great job of energy conservation right now."

"People use energy, not buildings," said Energy Education Specialist Michael Barancewicz.

Treanor said that, plus the opportunity of a recently-replaced roof, made it a good school for the pilot program.

He said the building will now save more than \$100,000 a year in utility costs, meaning the project will pay for itself in 17 or 18 years.

"The School Board is part of this, and we've been able to show them that just over the last couple of years, solar arrays have actually, from our perspective, they've gotten to the point that they pay for themselves," Treanor said.

The solar array also provides a new educational tool at the middle school—both for learning about energy and the environment, said Principal Lenny Compton, and for picking up good habits.

"If a student spends a year in this class, every day sees a teacher taking this action, it's going to have more impact than somebody saying 'you better turn off those lights,'" Treanor said. "So through our example, we have the opportunity to educate the next generation."

The project is the first in a five-year contract with CMTA Energy Solutions. The company has already conducted a review of all of the other school buildings in the division, and will be bringing the division recommendations on which schools to tackle next.

Some of those are already taken care of; the school division is building new schools with solar arrays from day one, if they have enough roof space.

This article was updated Monday, Sept. 14 at 3:09 p.m. to correct a typo.

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Loudoun School Administrators Eye \$2M Energy Savings Contract

As a result of a conversation with 15 energy service companies last summer, the School Board is poised to issue ... Continue reading

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