

Ground broken for new environmentally friendly charter school  
Mohave Valley News  
By JENA SCHEUNEMAN

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BULLHEAD CITY -- A groundbreaking ceremony was held Tuesday for Mohave Accelerated Learning Center's new environmentally friendly school. The charter school's new facilities will be built on 15 acres just west of the intersection of Marina and Riviera boulevards. Mohave Accelerated Learning Center was established two years ago for grades 6-12, meeting in the Riviera Baptist Church. This year, 175 students are enrolled. The new school will house 600 students in grades K-12. At the ground breaking ceremony school administrator Vickie Christensen spoke to a crowd that included James Sedillo, an official from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, Matt Capalby, a community liason for ADEQ, who was representing Gov. Janet Napolitano; members of Bullhead Area Chamber of Commerce; members of Bullhead City Council and students. Christensen said the new property has been paid for in full with funds from one of two \$150,000 grants that the school has recently received. The land was purchased from the City of Bullhead City. City councilman Jack Hakim also spoke. "Vickie Christensen is a community asset. She and her students have worked extremely hard to make Bullhead City a better place to live," Hakim said. "They have been the leading instigators in cleaning up the state landsalong Highway 95. I'm thrilled to death for her and her students. "Plans for the new school are LEED certified. LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is a United States Green Building Council program which encourages the creation of environmentally responsible buildings. The school's 24 classroom buildings -- which will have 15,000 square foot under roof -- were designed by Paul Selberg of Selberg Associates. Selberg had become LEED certified to work on the project. Christensen said she believes this will be the first charter school in the United States to be LEED-certified. She said it is likely the first school in Arizona to be certified. "This should cost close to what a traditional building costs but consume a fraction of the electricity," said James Kalin of Ecostream, a contracted consultant for the school. "There will be solar energy, more plants involved, and hopefully with the help of the Department of Energy's support, this will be a zero energy site. They will actually produce more energy than they use." "The back of each classroom centers a semicircle atrium area," said school principal Dorothy Buckelew. "We can grow flowers, plants and even have an aviary. We will be doing a lot of interactive actives outside because we love the outdoors. There will be an administration building in the second phase, but that will have to wait, the kids come first. "Administrators plan to be teaching at the new site when the fall semester begins. "If we have to get some temporary buildings up, we're going to have school there -- do or die," Buckelew said. Because an acre of the new property is zoned commercial, administrators are also planning a commercial area along Marina Boulevard in the future. These would be vocational businesses for the students to work at and learn from. "We're thinking of doing maybe a little restaurant there and a media services business," Christensen said. Ecostream is also helping the school develop an advanced technology program. The second of the school's recent \$150,000 grants was a technology grant that is being used to develop an Internet site, which the students will work on. State of the art, 360 degree digital cameras, called Quicktime VR Panoramas have been purchased for the project along with computer equipment. The grant will also pay for training for students and faculty. Both grants were received with the help of Education Team Partners, LLC based in Tempe. Company representative Alex Hristov said the school's vision is both exciting and unique. He said his company is working on two other proposals for the school.

Starting on March 24, 2003:

Jim Westberg  
Energy Office  
Arizona Department of Commerce  
1700 W. Washington St., Suite 220  
Phoenix, AZ 85007  
jimw@azcommerce.com  
1-602-771-1145