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Bell Schools recognized for energy efficiency

by Lorie Settles/Staff Writer

07.23.10 - 02:45 am



PINEVILLE — The Bell County Board of Education was presented with a plaque in recognition of their efforts to reduce energy consumption when they met in regular session on Monday night.

The Harshaw Trane Environmental Stewardship is bestowed upon organizations that demonstrate leadership in energy efficiency, according to a press release issued by Trane.

Ernie Tacoghe, of Trane, presented the award to the school for implementing the energy reduction and facility enhancement program that has saved the school \$76,311 in energy costs between November 2008 and October 2009.

This has reduced the amount of greenhouse gases produced by the school system by 909 tons annually, according to Trane.

“What that means is that it’s the equivalent of 991 cars not driven for one year, over 10,000 barrels of oil not burned, and it’s also equivalent to 588 households’ electricity use for one year. So that is significant electricity saved for the school year,” said Tacoghe.

Superintendent George Thompson commended the board for its leadership on the issue.

“Our Board has shown great leadership by enabling our district to significantly reduce energy costs, while at the same time providing better air quality in the classrooms and protecting the global environment,” he said.

David M. Somokar, President of Clotfelter Samokar architectural firm was at the meeting to discuss the projects his firm is handling for the school system.

The board approved Clotfelter Samokar BG-1 estimates for the replacement of the roofs at Bell County High School and Bell Central.

“These are just estimates, they are not by any means final,” Samokar told the board. “This is basically to get the ball rolling in Frankfort so that we can proceed.”

The board also voted to approve Clotfelter Samokar as the architects for the renovation addition at the high school and the renovation of Bell Central.

John Schneider, of Vaughn and Melton, was present to update the board on the progress with the vocational school.

The board approved a change order to replace the manual flusher valves previously installed at the school with automatic ones, following a recommendation from the building inspector.

The board declined the application for payment of a portion of the project pending new progress.

Schneider explained that problems like the late installation of control joints, that should have been installed previously in the structure, has delayed the progress.

“They’ve had 30 days to start on it,” said vice chairman Dean Knuckles, about the addition of brick to the structure. “The materials have been laying there, if they would have started it might have been different. I’d rather wait until they at least get started on it.”

The board also discussed repairs that need to be made to the Bell Central driveway, where a sink hole is currently causing problems.

“We were trying to tap into any type of funding from the Department of Highways or the governor’s office,” said George Thompson. “Money is kind of hard to obligate right now because of the uncertainty of the budget.”

Thompson met with State Representative Rick Nelson and Scott Huddleston of the Highway Department at the site earlier in the month. Huddleston obtained estimates for driving steel into the area around the parking lot and driveway.

“The estimates came back that it was between \$94,000 and \$134,000 or thereabouts,” Thompson told the board.

The board decided that using crushed stone to fill the hole and maintain the area temporarily may be a better solution, until money can be budgeted to repair the problem permanently. No official action on the matter was taken.

Thompson reported to the board that attendance officers will be visiting the homes of absentee students more often in the coming year. Additionally, the Graduation Task Force will begin meetings after the start of the school year to encourage the re-enrollment of students who dropped out in the previous school year.

Thompson also informed the board about a pilot program that will teach the Singapore math method in Bell Central. The method teaches math concepts in an unconventional way, and has been incorporated into the state of Kentucky’s core standards for education.

“This may be the turning point for mathematics instruction for our district...” stated Thompson.

Thompson cited the use of the program in Fayette County schools, and its reported success and rapid growth throughout the system. In the coming school years, Thompson and the board would like to make use of the method throughout

the Bell County school system.

Thompson also updated the board on professional development initiatives that have taken place during the summer. Bell County instructors have attended seminars and meetings covering new teaching methods and other information regarding several subjects including social studies, language arts, and mathematics.

Additionally, Thompson told the board that there's been progress made on the high school track and it should be completed before winter.

He informed the board that members will have a training session with the Elgin Foundation, who provides grants for programs to advance academic skills, especially reading skills. Representatives from the foundation will be present to discuss new programs and board of education members from Pineville and Middlesboro schools will also be in attendance.

"If we teach kids to be proficient readers, then we've opened up a gate that otherwise would never be opened for them," Thompson remarked.

In other official business, the board approved the following motions:

- the minutes of the June 21st meeting
- the payment of bills
- fund raising requests
- facilities requests
- transportation requests
- approval of the contract with Riso, Inc., supplier of printer and copier supplies
- the second reading of Board Policy Update #33
- grant applications including the Full Service Community schools grant, and a grant from the Elgin Foundation.
- the application for the full time emergency certification of pre-school teacher
- the 2011 physical therapy contract through the same company used previously.
- temporary instatement of a certified special education teacher to serve as a representative of the Admissions Release Committee.
- piano lab maintenance agreement through the company used previously
- the re-establishment of the Curriculum Resource Coach position
- re-establishment of the position of Gifted and Talented Coordinator, reduced to a

195 day position.

- treasurer's bonds

- appointment of Doug Ramsey as board representative on the Certified Evaluation Appeals Panel to replace Chester Howard.

Lorie Settles is a staff writer at the Daily News. She may be contacted at lsettles@heartlandpublications.com.

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