



Clean energy lesson for Vo-Ag students

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MIDDLETOWN — Vocational-Agriculture Center students will soon be getting a special view of how renewable energy is made.

In a slight change of plans, a city task force devoted to clean energy has chosen to put a solar panel on the roof of the Vo-Ag center.

"It could have potential," said Vo-Ag Director Rebecca Isaacson, to enhance the school's curriculum, especially the agricultural mechanics unit, which teaches electricity.

The Clean Energy Task Force had originally planned to hoist the solar panel on the existing Middletown High School, but ran into a snag with state building code.

The committee voted Wednesday to make the switch. Ron Klattenberg, chairman of the Clean Energy Task

Force, said the panel will be up by March.

The solar panel will come thanks to local residents who have signed up for the Connecticut Clean Energy Options program.

At the moment, 180 city residents have agreed to pay a little extra, about \$4 to \$5 a month, on their Connecticut Light and Power bill to have a portion of their energy come from "clean" supplies — such as the sun, wind, or landfill gases.

As a reward for overwhelming participation, the third highest in the state, Middletown will receive a free solar panel. One panel is awarded for each 100 people who sign up.

The solar panel will help the city reach its goal of using 20 percent clean energy by the year 2010.

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In another attempt to reach that goal, the task force has approved a contract to buy three percent of its energy from Community Energy, Inc., which supplies energy from wind and other renewable sources.

The proposal, if approved by Common Council for the 2006-07 budget, would cost the city \$5,500 for the first year, with an option to renew a second year.

The purchase would be equivalent to offsetting about 445,000 pounds of carbon dioxide per year, according to Community Energy.