

Education

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that supports classroom activities, and we match employee gifts to eligible high schools, colleges and universities.

Our goal through all of our efforts is to make a difference for today's students and to support workforce development.

One of the utility industry's biggest challenges in the next decade will be finding trained employees to replace those eligible for retirement. The same is true for other industries.

That is why education is vital to our future.

This issue of *Montana Currents* highlights some of the many ways we support education. If you have an idea or program you'd like to share with us, please contact me at lrperry@pplweb.com or 406-237-6914. I also encourage you to contact me if you are an educator and would like to arrange for students to tour a PPL Montana facility to learn about electricity generation. To learn more about PPL Montana, visit www.pplmontana.com.



Community Affairs Manager
PPL Montana

Grant programs expand educational opportunities

PPL encourages and supports education through two competitive grant programs: the PPL Montana Community Fund and the PPL Project Earth grant program. Applications for both grant programs can be found on PPL Montana's Web site, www.pplmontana.com.

PPL Montana Community Fund

Of the 31 Community Fund grants awarded by PPL Montana in 2005, 23 were for initiatives designed, in part, to educate others. These grants accounted for about \$150,000 of the \$200,000 awarded.

PPL is accepting applications for the next round of community fund grants,

to be awarded in Spring 2006. Applications must be submitted by Jan. 27.

Project Earth

Nine schools received a total of more than \$12,000 combined in 2005 through the Project Earth grant program. The company is now accepting applications for 2006 grants. The deadline is Jan. 20.

The program provides grants of up to \$1,500 to winning schools to fund innovative projects that focus on issues such as watersheds, wetlands, air quality, renewable and non-renewable energy sources, and energy conservation.

Scholarships aid students' pursuit of higher learning

PPL invests in Montana's future by awarding \$12,000 in scholarships each year to eight students bound for Montana colleges and universities.

The scholarships are awarded to talented students based on academic record and extracurricular achievements. They are part of PPL's commitment to strengthening education and supporting the development of tomorrow's leaders.



Details about the scholarship programs – the PPL Montana Education Scholarship Program and the PPL Montana Family Scholarship Program – are available on the PPL Montana Web site, www.pplmontana.com.

Application forms will be posted on the Web site Feb. 15. Applications are due by March 31.

Poster contest

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"PPL Montana operates 11 hydroelectric facilities and manages recreational resources along many miles of Montana waterways," said Perry.

"Water safety is very important to us, and our hope is that the students' work and the new PPL Montana water-safety calendar will raise awareness and remind children and others to stay safe year-round when enjoying Montana's lakes, rivers and streams."

Grand-Prize Winners

- Sarah Ramsbacher, third grade
Chief Charlo Elementary School, Missoula
- Sienna Ballard, fourth grade
Whittier Elementary School, Great Falls
- Lexie LeProwse, fifth grade
Emerson Elementary School, Butte

Runners-Up

- Lindy Friday, third grade
Cherry Valley Elementary School, Polson
- Dylan McCrumb, fourth grade
Cherry Valley Elementary School, Polson

- Kari Tirrell, fifth grade
Cold Springs Elementary School, Missoula

Honorable Mention

- Shelby Fromm, third grade
Chief Charlo Elementary School, Missoula
- Lane Haskell, fourth grade
Holy Spirit Catholic School, Great Falls
- Melissa Schaefer, fifth grade
Billings Christian School, Billings

Resources help teachers deliver environmental, energy education

PPL has worked closely with teachers to develop classroom curricula on topics related to energy and the environment. The curricula equip teachers with information and hands-on activities they can use in the classroom. The following curricula are available to Montana teachers:

A Study in Hydropower

This curriculum is designed for students in grades 4-8. It documents the history of hydropower and explores the advantages and challenges of hydropower generation. The curriculum can be downloaded from PPL Montana's Web site, www.pplmontana.com.



Watt Do You Know About the Cost of Watts?

This curriculum is designed for students in grades 5-12. It helps students understand how to calculate the cost and use of electricity and includes a lesson plan on determining the costs of using different appliances. The curriculum can be downloaded from PPL Montana's Web site, www.pplmontana.com.



Understanding Air Quality and Air Monitoring

Designed for students in grades 10-12, this curriculum provides information about air quality and how air is monitored. Teachers must attend a day-long workshop to obtain this five-lesson unit. Interested teachers should contact Lisa Perry at 406-237-6914.



Students embark on 'expedition' with help from Community Fund



When explorer and Titanic discoverer Dr. Robert Ballard founded the JASON program in 1989, his vision was simple – to share with students the adventure of science and the rush of discovery.

His idea was to connect students and teachers with scientists and researchers, and to engage children in hands-on learning that would make science real and relevant.

Today, Ballard's idea and vision have become reality.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the Billings School District, where 22 teachers and about 1,500 students are participating in JASON for the first time, thanks in part to a \$10,000 grant from the PPL Montana Community Fund.

The grant was awarded to the Burns Technology Center at Montana State University, which manages the JASON program in Montana. The money covered half the cost of the curriculum, supplies and professional development for 34 participating teachers – 22 from Billings and 12 from nearby Montana school districts.

"We're trying to show students what researchers' lives are really like," said Theresa Huyser, coordinator for Montana JASON. "The reality is that a lot of researchers get to do really fun stuff," she said.

Each year, JASON's curriculum and activities focus on an "expedition." This year's expedition explores the mysteries of Earth and Mars.

Students in Billings and else-

where are asking questions about the engineering process and designing LEGO rovers, said Huyser. They're studying the landscape of Mars. They're exploring the requirements for life. And they're conducting experiments such as building Alka-Seltzer-propelled rockets to study Newton's Laws and gravity.

"Each teacher finds something out of the curriculum that they can focus on," said Huyser.

For Trish Loken, a life sciences teacher at Castle Rock Middle School, that "something" includes extremophiles. Extremophiles are organisms that thrive in extreme conditions. As part of the JASON project, her students have studied how certain bacteria thrive in extreme environments such as Yellowstone's hot springs.

"Being able to compare the extreme environments with what might exist on Mars has been exciting," said Loken. Getting the opportunity to talk about something local has also made it "more real," she added.

That idea – making science real for students – is what JASON is all about.

"This was a great opportunity to support several local school districts and to help make learning fun," said Lisa Perry, Community Affairs manager for PPL Montana. "We're excited to hear that teachers are having success with the program."



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Mobile computer lab welcome addition to elementary school

Since establishing a mobile wireless computer lab, students and teachers at Meadowlark Elementary School in Billings have embraced technology in a big way.

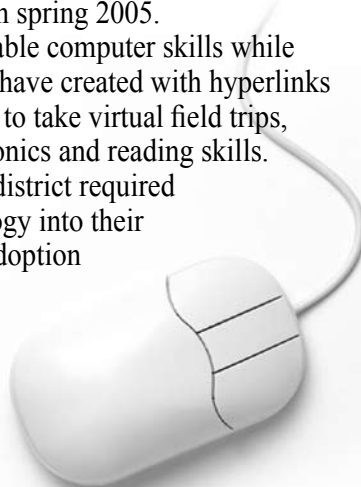
“The lab is in nearly constant use every day and I am stunned by the enthusiasm the staff has shown in integrating the laptops into their lessons,” said Kevin Croff, Meadowlark’s principal.

The lab was made possible with a \$10,000 grant that was part of the PPL Montana Community Fund program launched in spring 2005.

Meadowlark’s 380 students are learning valuable computer skills while working on electronic worksheets that teachers have created with hyperlinks to Internet resources. They also have the ability to take virtual field trips, conduct research, create books and work on phonics and reading skills.

Croff, whose previous position in the school district required helping teachers and students integrate technology into their curriculum, said he has never seen such rapid adoption and use of technology.

The grant was part of \$200,000 that PPL Montana awarded to 31 Montana organizations in 2005 via its inaugural round of Community Fund grants.



Montana Currents is your source of information about PPL Montana’s commitment to the environment and our communities. It’s just one more way we’re putting our energy into Montana communities.

Questions or comments? Contact:

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