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American Canyon: Praise for an Energy-Efficient High School

American Canyon High School, which opened in the fall of 2010, is one of the most energy-efficient public high schools in the nation. In a dedication ceremony for its photovoltaic solar system held on Wednesday (Nov. 16), public officials and representatives of companies including PG&E praised the effort.

An estimated \$200,000 per year will be saved in energy and water costs due to the efficiency innovations.

"The Napa Valley Unified School District demonstrates a commitment to the environment that we wholeheartedly share," said Josh Townsend, a PG&E government relations manager for the North Bay. "The solar PV system at American Canyon High is estimated to produce more than 1.5 million kWh annually and avoid more than 786,000 pounds of CO₂ annually."



At American Canyon High School, 4,000 solar panels on the roof and on the ground generate 80 percent of the needed electricity. (Photo by Quattrocchi Kwok Architects.)

Some highlights of the project:

- The school has a one-megawatt solar system from SPG Solar on its grounds and roof that provides 80 percent of the electricity needed on campus. Project designers say the 4,000-panel system represents potential savings of \$17 million over the next 25 years.
- The school uses daylight for lighting and automatic lighting controls that quickly turn off lights that aren't needed.
- The school was the first in California built as part of the Collaborative for High Performance Schools program, which offers green-building ratings for public schools. It is believed the school is the highest-ranking CHPS verified school in California.
- Water-saving features include low-flow fixtures, dual-flush toilets and waterless urinals.

The campus also features an aquatic center, a 400-seat theater a split-level gym and a variety of athletic fields.

"The construction of American Canyon High School brings the latest technologies and green operating features together at one site," Don Evans of the Napa Valley Unified School District told the [North Bay Business Journal](#). "Incorporating green efforts into the learning environment of a high school rich with technological amenities from which students will participate and witness our changing world is a very positive educational experience."

Architects for the project were Quattrocchi Kwok Architects of Santa Rosa. Lathrop Construction of Benicia was the general contractor for the \$120 million project.

Participating in Wednesday's event were Dr. Patrick Sweeney, Napa County Unified School District superintendent; Dr. Barbara Nemko, Napa County Office of Education superintendent; Melissa Rodenzo, aide to U.S. Rep. Mike Thompson; Don Evans, Napa County Unified School District construction supervisor; Mark Brewer, principal at American Canyon High School; Amy Schaus, the principal architect at Quattrocchi Kwok Architects; and representatives from SPG Solar.

Keywords: [American Canyon](#), [Community Involvement](#), [Energy Savings](#), [Local](#), [Napa County](#), [Solar Power](#)

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