



COTATI-ROHNERT PARK
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
SUPERINTENDENT

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 5, 2008

Contact: Barbara Vrankovich
Superintendent
(707) 792-4722

RANCHO COTATE'S SCIENCE TEACHERS AWARDED THREE P.G.& E. ENERGY GRANTS

ROHNERT PARK, CA - Over the past two years, three of Rancho Cotate's science teachers have been awarded \$5,000 grants from PG & E to enable science teachers to acquire equipment and materials to study energy-related issues. In the fall of 2007, Lisa Zavieh, former Rancho physics and earth science teacher, was awarded a grant for students to study electricity in houses where the students actually built model houses and wired them. In the spring of 2008, teacher Cathy Henrich was awarded a \$5,000 grant to enable students to use the scientific method to study the effect that greenhouse gases have in global warming. Students will fill clear boxes with each of the greenhouse gases (methane, carbon dioxide, and water vapor), place them in the sun and monitor their temperatures. Students will then compare their results to a control of normal air and see how the temperatures were modified by the greenhouse gases. At the conclusion of the project, students will publish their findings to the community in an educational brochure. Using the grant proceeds, Ms. Henrich purchased a laptop computer for data collection and presentation, an LCD projector for visual presentation of data and related material, and a student response system to allow full participation of all students including an assessment of their learning. Finally, just this month, Rancho's newest science teacher, Jim Ramsey, was awarded \$5,000 from PG & E to set up a demonstration household electrical system with lights and appliances, measuring different configurations as to efficiency and power usage. This will include a solar panel array, controllers and a wireless remote control system. The grant proceeds will be used to purchase a laptop with wireless control features and a projector to display the results and information gathered during the project. When the project wraps up in about six months, students will present their results to other classes, staff, school board, PTA, and the community at large. Projects such as these stimulate student interest in the critical area of energy conservation and provide them with an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge in an integrated, meaningful manner.