

Oklahoma academy pupils enjoy outdoor classroom

United Press International
GUYMON, Okla. — When math students need to calculate the distance a rocket travels they just launch one of their own — in an outdoor classroom that is part of a state-funded creative education program.

At a "School Outdoors" in this Oklahoma Panhandle city of 8,500 people, students of all grade levels see alternative energy sources in action and learn about plant and animal life firsthand.

The outdoor school idea is popular with students because they can participate, said Guymon educator Jess Nelson, who originated the idea six years ago.

Nelson is principal of Guymon's Academy School,

which educates part of Guymon's students from kindergarten through fourth grade and all fifth and sixth graders.

The program is popular with educators, Nelson said, because it provides "practical experience" for students they are trying to teach.

"The junior high teachers take kids up and teach math classes up there," Nelson said. "They measure distances, shoot off rockets and measure the altitude."

"It gives them a practical aspect of the math they study in class," the principal said.

Each spring the fifth and sixth graders participate in an Oklahoma Land Run designed to provide a better understanding of their ancestors' struggle as

homesteaders in the rugged Panhandle.

During the spring Land Run festivities students churn butter, make candles and re-enact the run which helped settle Oklahoma.

"It gives them some idea of what people were doing at the time of the land run," Nelson said.

The program, called School Outdoors or "SOD," is funded by a three-year \$65,000 Department of Education grant. Nelson said the school district and community had contributed at least that much in added help, including the five-acre plot where the outdoor classroom is located.

The school outdoors is available for Guymon's approximately 2,000 students. The location is an old dumping ground turned into a park near the community's only high school.

A wind generator harnesses the wind to provide electricity for a combination greenhouse and classroom on the site. Solar

collectors heat the building during the winter.

A windmill pumps water. There also is a water wheel and students have built a natural water fountain. Even ducks that swim lazily on the area's two ponds are the result of a school activity.

"The ducks on the ponds are some the kids have incubated in the classroom," Nelson said. "Different kids helped plant trees in the area."

Nelson, a tall, thin man comfortably dressed in blue jeans, flannel shirt and cowboy boots for a school day, says the SOD program stems from his love of the outdoors and a desire to teach children about nature.

"I enjoy it," Nelson said. "I've always enjoyed being outdoors. That's probably why I'm interested in it."

The educator said plans for the outdoor classroom evolved from several ideas put together, including an interest in alternative energy forms.



It's a dog's life

Taking a break from studying, sophomores Jeff Berry and Jane Russell play with a dog that took a swim at Rudder Fountain on Wednesday's warm afternoon. He is a petroleum engineering major from Dallas, and Russell is a finance major from Austin.

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Hunt family backs takeover of Louisiana oil producer

United Press International
NEW ORLEANS — A dissident group seeking to oust Louisiana Land & Exploration Co. Chairman John G. Phillips and other management has the vote of the wealthy Hunt family of Texas, the largest single owner.

Through Dallas-based Placid Oil Co., the Hunt interests own 4,688,600 shares or 12.34 percent of the New Orleans-based oil producer.

The Hunt family's disclosure Monday of its support of the dissident group marked the first public commitment to either side in the power struggle.

Phillips, who also is LL&E's chief executive, expressed "disappointment," but said he remains confident of winning the proxy battle May 12 for control of the company, which has \$1.68 billion in assets.

Disclosure of the Hunt commitment was made by C. D.

Brown, president of Placid. He said the company doesn't back the dissident group led by Delo H. Caspary of Houston, Texas, after reviewing the performance of Louisiana management.

Placid is owned by the family trusts and has accumulated more than \$6 billion, is the backbone of the family fortune left by oilman H. L. Hunt.

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"So was learning how to fly a helicopter. It takes a lot more skill than an airplane. If you think college is demanding, flight school is even tougher. It's not only academically demanding, it's really mentally demanding as well as physically."

"In Germany, I'll have a chance to use some of the leadership and management techniques I learned in ROTC. It's going to be a real challenge having command responsibilities."

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