



NEWS

SPORTS

BUSINESS

FEATURES

OUR TOWN

WEEKEND

OPINION

CLASSIFIEDS

search

ADVANCED SEARCH

RSS FEEDS

FAQ

E-EDITION



Economic Impact Of New High School Discussed Thursday Millage Election Coming Up In 11 Days

LAST UPDATED THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2009 9:28 PM CDT IN NEWS

By [Rose Ann Pearce](#)
THE MORNING NEWS

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FAYETTEVILLE — To spend \$350,000 for LEED Silver certification on the new Fayetteville High School would return thousands of dollars in energy savings and provide a new type of learning tool.

That's the reason the Fayetteville School District is so committed to build a school to meet LEED standards.

That was the word from Jim Halsell, Fayetteville School Board member speaking to a small group of members of the Sierra Club.

Quoting from a letter sent to the district from the U.S. Green Building Council's Arkansas chapter, green schools cost less to operate, freeing up resources to improve student education, Halsell read. Better acoustics, lighting and air quality are also incorporated.

Joining Halsell on the panel were Susan Norton, chief information officer for the school district; Jon Gheen, a history teacher in the alternative program at the high school; and John Coleman, sustainability director for the City of Fayetteville.

An hour earlier Thursday, the campaign committee promoting support for the upcoming millage election on Sept. 15 sponsored a panel discussion on the economic impact of building a new high school in the city.

"This project will provide our own stimulus package for Fayetteville," Lisa Morstad, chief financial officersaid. The \$350,000 in LEED money built in the budget is only .36 of a percent of the construction package but the district expects to see a 26 percent return on investment in the two years.

Another key factor is an effort to curb the dropout rate by students who don't feel engaged in a large school setting. The district has lost 470 students from the high school in the last three years.

Panelists included Linda Auman, chief curriculum officer for the school district; Kathy Deck, director, UA Center for Business and Economic Research; Don Marr, city of staff, City of Fayetteville; and Karon Reese, executive broker, Bassett Mix Realtors.

Back at the Sierra Club meeting, John Coleman said the city adopted a resolution in 2007 requiring new buildings to be built in pursuit of LEED silver certification. The new Arvest Bank on Joyce Boulevard has a silver certification and is using that model to build new banks in Tulsa, Okla., and Springdale, Mo.

Unite Northwest Arkansas, an anti-tax group in Northwest Arkansas, also was scheduled to meet Thursday night in Springdale but principal organizer, Laurie Masterson, could not be reached by telephone during the event.

Also Wednesday, the Fayetteville Education Foundation voted to endorse the millage vote, an increase of 4.9 mills.

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Info

The Fayetteville School District millage election gets under way Tuesday when early voting begins at the Washington County Clerk's Office. The regular election is scheduled a week later on Sept. 15. Early voting ends Sept, 14.

Source: Staff Report.

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sunflowerboat wrote on *Sep 3, 2009 10:39*

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PM:

" What a rip off "Vote NO!!!! to this Crazy Baloney "

ozarks wrote on *Sep 3, 2009 11:02 PM:*

" I agree 100% "

Polymanthanein wrote on *Sep 4, 2009 7:22 AM:*

" The building does not educate the child nor does it reduce the dropout rate.

"Another key factor is an effort to curb the dropout rate by students who don't feel engaged in a large school setting. The district has lost 470 students from the high school in the last three years."

State law regulates the number of high school students in a classroom to 30. No matter if the building is old, new or LEED certified. Classroom size is regulated.

The district should be ashamed of such a large dropout rate. Focus on the real problem - the product! "

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