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Green California Schools and Community Colleges Summit Comes to Pasadena in October 29-30

By Barry Scott

“Green Technology” is a non-profit initiative designed to inform government efforts toward sustainability, providing a forum in which government officials can communicate with those in the private sector who are developing and distributing green technologies. With mandates for green building, renewable energy, and “environmentally preferable” purchasing, California has made an unequalled commitment to a green future. Featured efforts of the organization are Green Technology magazine and annual Green Schools conferences attended by teachers, administrators, engineers and many others involved in energy efficient and sustainable schools and programs.

Green Technology’s Green Schools Summit and Exposition events normally take place annually with a spring event in Sacramento and a second summit in Pasadena in the fall or winter. Leaders in the world of green products and practices kick off events with a keynote speech, and breakout sessions assist schools with topics such as green design and construction, lighting and HVAC, LEED certification, and much more. Green vendors, representatives from public and educational agencies, and varied nonprofits fill the exhibition hall with a suite of school-based resources that are unmatched by any other conference. With a strong emphasis on energy efficient products and practices, early events were attended largely by architects and schools facility administrators, but over time more teachers were treated to educational programming. After all, what good is a green school if the teachers and students aren’t a part of the program?

The NEED Project has been a fan of Green Technology events since their first Green Schools Summit in 2007. At the 2008 Summit in Anaheim, NEED held a session titled “Energy Education Partnerships and Programs” that showcased their PG&E Solar Schools and other collaborative initiatives aimed at matching schools with private sector sponsors and public agencies.

In March of 2010, Green Technology provided eight passes to their Sacramento summit to a team of sixth graders from NEED Project Teacher Advisory Board Member Greg

Holman's Evergreen Sixth Grade Academy. The students were there to browse the exhibitor booths and seek advice on how best to spend a \$10,000 grant they received to purchase energy efficiency upgrades. It happened that on that same day, then-Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger was visiting the convention and when his staffers saw the young students the governor scrambled over for a photo op with the kids!

The NEED Project serves on the school's Advisory Board, under co-chairs Tom Torlakson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Chet Widom, California State Architect.

This year's Summit will take place at the Pasadena Convention Center on October 29-30. The Summit is the largest annual event focused on green programs in the nation's schools—and NEED will be there, as their state program coordinator will present a breakout session titled, "Career Technical Education Resources and Partnership Academies in the Energy & Utilities and Green Sectors". That's a mouthful! But there's a lot of activity in this corner of the energy education universe.

The expo boasts over 100 companies in participation and offers green products and services, educational sessions, and special events. It is a unique annual opportunity for participants from every end of the energy spectrum to share innovations in green policy, practice, and technology.