

**PRESS RELEASE
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Basalt Middle School Teacher Recognized for Renewable Energy Efforts

Golden, Colo., November 17, 2004 -- On a sunny day in April, a small group of Basalt Middle School students took their knowledge of renewable energy outside the classroom and onto the roof. The fifth and sixth graders demonstrated the power of learning by helping install a one-kilowatt photovoltaic (PV) system to provide solar electricity for the school. The Solar Club activity was organized by their teacher, Jane Douglass. Her outstanding efforts have earned Douglass the first Renewable Energy Teacher Award from the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) National Renewable Energy Laboratory's (NREL) Office of Education Programs.

Douglass, a sixth-grade math and science teacher, lead the charge to have the PV system installed and established the Solar Club for her middle school students to learn about the many environmental benefits of renewable energy.

"How our growing energy needs will be satisfied is becoming more of an issue and I believe the use of solar energy will become a major theme in my students' lifetime," Douglass said.

Douglass secured more than \$13,000 in local grant money to help purchase the PV system and data monitoring system for the school and worked with Solar Energy International (SEI) to design the system. SEI nominated Douglass for the Renewable Energy Teacher Award.

"Jane decided the implementation of a PV system would serve as an amazing education tool for the students while helping to offset the school's carbon emissions," Solar Energy International's Soozie Friedmar said. "After hearing about the success at Basalt Middle School, SEI has received many inquiries from other teachers about how they can implement the same sort of project for their schools."

Students in the Solar Club helped with the installation of the PV panels on April 28 after working with SEI to learn how to wire the panels. The next week, the Solar Club showcased the new system at a Solar Fair for Basalt Elementary and Basalt Middle School students. For the Solar Fair, the students organized booths, held solar car races and baked cookies in solar ovens.

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"It was exciting to see such a mix of students working together for the common goal of renewable energy," Douglass said. "The Solar Fair was the grand finale and the students did a great job of sharing their knowledge with their fellow students."

The award will be presented at the Colorado Science Teachers Convention Dinner at 6:30 p.m. on Nov. 18 at the Denver Merchandise Mart, 451 East. 58th Avenue.

As part of the Colorado Science Teachers Convention, NREL's Office of Education Programs will display its Renewable Energy & Efficiency Education on Wheels (RnE2EW) vehicle from 8:15 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. on Nov. 19. RnE2EW is an educational outreach vehicle designed to bring renewable energy and energy efficiency education programs and information to teachers, students and consumers at schools, special events and public venues.

NREL's Office of Education Programs develops and implements energy science programs that engage the young minds of future leaders, scientists and engineers, cultivates partnerships with schools and community organizations and offers opportunities to teachers that revitalize their research interests and skills while giving them additional classroom science applications and technical content.

NREL is the U.S. Department of Energy's premier laboratory for renewable energy research and development (R&D) and a leading laboratory for energy efficiency R&D. NREL is operated for DOE by Midwest Research Institute and Battelle.

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