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## Teachers check out new middle school

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MEGAN LEE Casper Star-Tribune | Posted: Saturday, August 15, 2009 12:00 am | (2) Comments

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CASPER - The new CY Middle School will be leaner, greener and more technologically advanced than the current school, officials said Friday.

The school's teachers enjoyed a tour of the building, which is still missing ceilings, walls and electrical outlets. The building is expected to open for the beginning of the 2010-11 school year.

They gathered for a barbecue and a question-and-answer session in what will be a cafeteria/auditorium when the school is complete.

"Everybody's pretty excited," said Nick Zaharas, a ninth-grade history teacher. "It's supposed to be a state-of-the-art school."

And it will be state-of-the-art, as one of the most technologically advanced middle schools in the country, said Principal Dean Braughton.

"We had the opportunity to bring equipment for kids to explore to find out all the possibilities for them as they grow and join the work force," he said. "It's just as important for kids to find out what they don't like as what they do."

New learning labs will include robotics, aquaculture, lasers and other "equipment that's 21st century," he said.

Not only will the curriculum include new-age technology, but so will the building itself. The school will meet green standards, including solar panels and wind generators.

"We're happy to be working with the school district as part of this green project," said Matt Arabasz with RB+B Architects from Fort Collins, Colo. "It's largely oriented to the north and south, so we can get our nice controlled daylighting in the building. And the mechanical system is very, very efficient. Just the footprint of the building, too. ... It's a very compact building to help deal with the wind up here."

The alternative energy sources will keep operating costs down and help children learn about new technologies, Arabasz said.

"There are very few hallways. The state challenged us to make good use of space, so we did,"

Broughton said.

Once finished, the school will hold up to 750 students. Although it's designed as a sixth- through eighth-grade building, ninth-graders will also be housed in the school during its first year. The old CY Junior High is likely to be used as a transitional facility, but no final decisions have been made, Broughton said.

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