

[City remodels 3 buildings to save money, energy: Grant allows energy-efficient lights, heating, windows and solar panels](#)

Written by Eric Guenther Friday, 27 May 2011 04:52

Crews began installing solar panels on the rooftop of the Lincoln Square Apartments on York Street.

The Bellingham Housing Authority received a \$9.9 million federal grant to start the Green Communities Project last October. The goal of the project is to create an environmentally conscious community.

This January, the housing authority started remodeling the apartments at Lincoln Square, Chuckanut Square on 12th Street, and Washington Square on E Street. Construction workers are using environmentally friendly technology, such as solar panels, an energy-efficient water heating system, green lighting systems and energy-efficient windows.

While only in its first phase, both the construction company, Hytech Roofing, Inc., and the Bellingham Housing Authority plan to start construction and installation of a second green roof on the same building in July. The green roofs will be more durable and have a greater slope that will increase

stormwater runoff by 80 percent. The roofs are also more insulated.



GREEN HOUSING: Construction workers for Hytech Roofing, Inc. install solar panels on the Lincoln Square apartment complex roof Wednesday, May 25. Photo by Sarah C. Richardson | THE WESTERN FRONT

The Green Communities Project's purpose is "to implement energy efficiency and green building retrofits to three of the largest residential buildings in Bellingham," according to the Bellingham Housing Authority.

The group is also partnering with local organizations to support local businesses that are innovators in green construction and renewable energy, such as Sustainable Connections.

Sustainable Connections chose Leah White as representative for the project. White is the resident resource awareness program coordinator for the Office of Sustainability at Western.

On May 20, White and Western students met with Lincoln Square residents and handed out energy-efficient fluorescent light bulbs.

The energy retrofitting project is also partnering with Western's Go For The Green Project, which saved \$27,900 and reduced electricity usage by 19.7 percent on Western's campus.

Using the information and energy-saving tactics received from Go For The Green, White and students helped show Lincoln Square residents how the retrofits will improve the environment and their building, as well as save electricity.

"We are working to help the residents understand sustainability," said Mariah Ross, the sustainable business development manager for Sustainable Connections.

When people make simple changes to their living habits, they can really cut down their energy consumption, she said.

Ross and others are working with the residents to make energy-conscious decisions, like turning off lights and conserving water, she said.

Bellingham received the \$9.9 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, as a result of a federal stimulus project President Barack Obama created in 2009.

Renovations to the three buildings are expected to be completed by September 2012, according to the Bellingham Housing Authority and Sustainable Connections.