



### \$15 million collaborative to help city save energy

Diana Washington Valdez / El Paso Times

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El Paso Mayor John Cook held a model of a solar panel that will be used to heat the swimming pools in the Armijo Aquatic Center as he spoke Monday with engineer Harry Romine of Johnson Controls. The city announced a \$15 million collaborative energy-saving initiative Monday at

EL PASO -- The city of El Paso has a head start on the green revolution President-elect Barack Obama envisions will save energy and create new clean jobs, Mayor John Cook says.

On Monday, Cook and other dignitaries stood next to the Armijo Aquatic Center in South El Paso to announce a \$15 million collaboration between Johnson Controls and El Paso Electric Co. intended to reduce the city's energy use and save taxpayers \$1.7 million each year.

The project includes installing a solar energy

system to heat the Armijo pool and seven other pools in El Paso, and investing in retrofits for street lights and for heating, cooling and lighting at city facilities.

"(Armijo) is but a snapshot of the city's sustainability efforts at 53 facilities and at more than 600 intersections," said Marty Howell, the city's sustainability manager.

Cook said the project will help reduce the city's energy consumption by 18 million kilowatt hours per year, plus "create 110 new jobs and eliminate 11,300 tons of air pollutants (annually), which is equivalent to removing 1,950 cars from the road each year."

On Tuesday, the city will consider a resolution asking Obama and the incoming Congress to invest stimulus money in local energy-conservation programs as a quick way to create jobs, revitalize the economy and promote energy independence.

Cook said El Paso's project provides a blueprint for a green economy led by local governments.

Roger Dickinson, co-chairman of Climate Communities and Sacramento County, Calif., supervisor, said "Climate Communities and ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability) USA are organizing city and county leaders from across America to make sure federal decision makers understand the essential role of local governments in reducing energy use and addressing climate change."

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