

Southwest Iowa News Online

Solar Bike Tour to visit Oakland

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OAKLAND - The Solar Bike Tour is coming to Oakland on Tuesday, Sept. 26, at 2:30 p.m., according to David Osterberg, the organizer for the bicycle tour.

Osterberg, an associate professor of Occupational and Environmental Health at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, is integrally involved with the Iowa Policy Project.

"We have two goals for the Solar Bike Tour," he said. "One is to focus on promotion of renewable energy projects and secondly, we wanted to honor Sen. Hubert Houser for his leadership on renewable energy in the 2005 and 2006 legislative sessions."

Houser led legislators toward unanimous support of locally owned wind power by passing an extension of last year's "small wind tax credit." The bill assists farmers and other Iowans who wish to get into the wind power business and keep some of the profits from this growing industry here in Iowa.

Houser also played a major role in the Solar Energy Bill that exempts solar equipment from Iowa sales tax, making solar energy more affordable for use in electric generation and heating applications, including water pumping, grain drying and fence electrification, as well as the residential use.

Another accomplishment of the 2006 Legislature was the bill creating a Renewable Fuels Standard requiring 10 percent of fuel used in the state to be ethanol or bio-diesel, ramping up to 25 percent by 2020. Other accompanying bills provide assistance to gas stations to make E85 more readily available.

As part of its commitment to protecting natural resources, the RC&D committed to construct a "green" office building.

The building reduced landfill waste by nearly 15 tons through its use of recycled and recyclable materials. The building reduces CO2 emissions through energy efficient lighting, heating and cooling and avoiding materials with ozone depleting substances.