

# ADE DAILY NEWS CLIPS

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## **Van Buren School Receives Platinum For Going Green (Southwest Times Record)**

Van Buren elementary school has been given the highest award in the state from the Arkansas Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council.

King Elementary school received the Platinum Award from the USGBC as part of the 2012-13 Green Schools Challenge, according to information from Ginny Kurrus, education director for the USGBC Arkansas chapter.

A joint initiative of the USGBC-Arkansas and the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators, the program pairs a USGBC professional mentor with a student team with the challenge to “Green Your School.” Schools work with their mentors from October to March to choose a project, carry it out and submit their results to USGBC in the form of a written report and short video.

Under the mentorship of Jolie Hobbs, special education teacher at King, and Mark Cloud, an architect from northwest Arkansas, King Elementary worked on projects of school composting, a vermiculture kit in third grade (worm composting), Parent/Community Recycle Drop Off Days and a school organic garden.

“At King, we worked very hard on our projects, documenting and taking pictures throughout the entire school year,” Hobbs said in an email, adding that almost all of the school’s 590 students and staff participated in the challenge. “To complete the challenge, we had to submit a five-minute video and a one-page paper to describe our projects and the success we saw while being involved in the challenge.”

Hobbs said that through the efforts in teaching environmental stewardship to students, school officials hope the students will perpetuate these projects by expanding the garden each year, increasing the use of the school composter and bringing more awareness to the worm composting.

Along with the award came a cash prize of \$750, which King will use to further green efforts at the school, according to Hobbs.

“King Elementary was honored to take the top prize in this challenge,” she added, noting that the judges commented on how entertaining the video was and how involved the students were in the projects. “King School teaches more than the standard curriculum, and our students are our focus.”

She added that the environmental stewardship had also expanded into the students’ homes.

“Families are learning to reduce their waste and make overall healthier conscientious choices in ways they had not ever considered due to the enthusiasm and insistence of our children; they made this happen,” she said. “It cannot be forced through the use of a ‘program’ but promoted in lifelong conservation practices.

“Students are moving their families from the ‘why’ mindset to the ‘why not’ mindset, because where they learn matters,” Hobbs added.