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Heartland Christian Academy is weather reporting site

Michelle Ruckdaschel BemidjiPioneer
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One of the newest weather reporting sites for a national weather network is now up and running at a local school.

With the help of Heartland Christian Academy, WeatherBug is now tracking live weather conditions in Bemidji.

"We just came online over Christmas break," Heartland Principal Robert Roach said.



Heartland Christian Academy Principal Robert Roach shows students a digital readout of weather conditions at the school's WeatherBug tracking station. The students, from left, are seventh-grader Michael Wille, seventh-grader Julia Armstrong, seventh-grader Elias Hendrickson and eighth-grader Ben Fultz. Pioneer Photo/Monte Draper

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Interested in the opportunity, Heartland received a donation of professional meteorological equipment so it could connect with WeatherBug. Roach said the equipment is designed for continuous operation.

Behind the school, a 27-foot steel pole — complete with a rain gauge and sensors for wind, temperature, humidity and light — monitors the weather. In the school library, the master control, which is connected to a computer, sends the weather data to the Internet and a digital readout. The digital readout, which also is located in the library, displays the weather conditions.

"We're excited," Roach said.

He said the project is raising an interest in meteorology among Heartland students. Whenever students stop by the library, he said they check the current weather conditions and they're curious about it.

He said the school plans to incorporate the tracking station into its curriculum.

"When our students study the weather, we believe they are studying the handiwork of God," Roach said. "We believe that the God of the universe is the one that also controls the details of the weather."

The tracking station is not only benefiting Heartland, but it's helping Buena Vista Ski Area, which is six miles away. Suzanne Thomas of Buena Vista Ski Area said ski area employees visit the WeatherBug Web site to help make decisions on snowmaking.

"We've been on it a number of times already," said Thomas, who is also a member of Heartland's school board.

Her husband, Don, helped Heartland install the weather pole at the school. Bemidji Steel donated the steel for the pole and Dave Perkins of Perkins Electric worked on the electronics to get the tracking station up and running.

WeatherBug is online at weather.weatherbug.com.

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