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Randolph gets first electric bus

BY ENTERPRISE STAFF

ASHEBORO — The Randolph County School System was the recipient this week of the first electric school bus purchased for North Carolina schools with money the state received in a fraud settlement with Volkswagen.

Randolph Electric Membership Corp. has provided a DC Fast charger and related electrical infrastructure for the bus, manufactured by Thomas Built Buses, on the campus of Southwestern Randolph Middle School.

Gov. Roy Cooper's office announced in October that more than \$30.1 million from the N.C. Volkswagen Settlement Program would be distributed by the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality to pay for electric and low-emission diesel buses. That money was from the remaining \$68 million of the state's share of a national settlement with the automaker over its use of equipment and software in its vehicles to cheat on pollution tests.

The new zero-emission and low-emission school buses are replacing some of the dirtiest diesel

buses in the state, some of which are more than 30 years old and spew more than 20 times as much nitrogen oxide and particulates as modern diesel buses.

Nitrogen oxide leads to the formation of ground-level ozone, which aggravates asthma and can cause breathing trouble in young children and older adults. Particulate matter from vehicle pollution has been linked to heart and lung conditions.

At a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Tuesday, Superintendent Stephen Gainey welcomed board of education members, representatives of Carolina Thomas and Thomas Built Buses, the secretaries of the N.C. Department of Public Instruction and N.C. Department of Environmental Quality and Randolph EMC's board of directors.

"The partnerships represented here today demonstrate the dedication of those organizations that care about the future of their communities," Gainey said. "Together, we'll make this pilot program a



PHOTOS BY RANDOLPH EMC

Officials held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the arrival of the electric bus.



The bus's hood was opened to display the electric engine.

success for the state of North Carolina."

Randolph EMC said in a press release that it will analyze how charging the electric bus affects the electric grid and Ran-

dolph County School System's electric bill. The pilot project will serve as a case study for future applications of electric vehicle technology across the state.