

Cooperative Connection

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Southeast Service Cooperative

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Inside

Online learning options.....	2
BrainHoney & KDS	3
Adverse risk selection	4 & 5
Emergency map preparation	6
SSC staffer joins NAMTC Board..	7
Coop purchasing benefits ...	8 & 9
Young Authors, Young Artists ..	10
Science Lab project honored....	11
Spelling Bee update	12
Knowledge Bowl standings	13
District vs. district challenge	14
Sand Creek EAP	15
Recent Board actions	16
Upcoming events	17
Directory.....	18

Technology in the Classroom Expo proves to be successful - Will be offered again next year

by Heidi Knepper

On March 8th Southeast Service Cooperative hosted its first annual Technology in the Classroom Expo. Renowned technology guru and speaker, Kevin Honeycutt, presented a keynote as well as morning and afternoon breakout sessions.

Reason Computers, Tierney Brothers, Lightspeed and NDR were the vendors in attendance to introduce their products to attendees and answer questions. Participants were able to network with one another, the presenters and the vendors while they registered and had a light breakfast.



Kevin Honeycutt delivering the keynote presentation to the Tech Expo attendees

Kevin Honeycutt delivered the keynote address during which he shared the ways that teaching needs to change with the introduction of so much technology

Technology expo continues on page 7

Lake City wins district vs. district walking challenge!

by Nicole LaChapelle

Due to their motivation, determination and a total of 14,555,525 steps, Lake City Public Schools has been named the champion of the first ever southeast Minnesota inter-district walking challenge! That 14 million plus steps works out to be an average of 373,218 steps walked per person for the month of January. Eight southeast area school districts participated in the month-long challenge, which was the brainchild of Plainview-Elgin-Millville's Wellness Coordinator Marcia Schultz. Participating districts



included: Cannon Falls, Dover-Eyota, Grand Meadow, Kingsland, Lake City, Plainview-Elgin-Millville, St. Charles and Zumbrota-Mazeppa.

The rules of the challenge were simple. If staff members wanted to participate, all they had to do was wear a pedometer and keep track of their steps. Participants submitted

Walking challenge continues on page 14



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Opportunities for distance education options available through SSC

by Kari Kubicek

SSC continues to offer distance learning opportunities for member districts through its partnership with Southwest/West Central Service Cooperative (SWWC). These opportunities include both online and Interactive Videoconferencing (ITV) course options for students that may otherwise not be available in their districts.

The annual district enrollment fee is \$500.00 for districts with a student enrollment under 2,499 and \$900.00 for districts with a student enrollment over \$2,500. The annual fee covers the following services and opportunities:

- Access to the Moodle Course Management System (CMS) for receiving and offering fully online learning courses through the program. Hybrid courses will be hosted on SSC's Moodle site at no additional cost. Instructors will be required to complete SSC hosted Moodle training to have access to Moodle site for hybrid/blended courses. These trainings will be offered at a discounted rate for SWWC Online Learning Community members.
- Access to online and ITV courseware
- Assistance with online course development and course certification to be

offered as an online course through SWWC Online Learning Community

- Regional program administration and coordination with the Minnesota Department of Education
- Maintenance of the CMS, including program, software and server technical support
- Districts retain all state and federal funding for students enrolled in SWWC Online Learning Community courses

Districts may enroll students in a SWWC online course for the 2011-12 school year at the rate of \$370.00 per student per semester course or an ITV course at a rate of \$330.00 per student per semester course. These rates are guaranteed if districts confirm enrollment numbers by May 13, 2011. Enrollments received after this date will be subject to a 15% late enrollment charge. The 2011-12 course catalog will be distributed to districts within the next month.

SSC has also negotiated an arrangement with Aventa to offer Aventa courseware to our districts while providing assistance with the enrollment and course delivery process. Member districts may purchase Aventa courseware through SSC at the rate of \$370.00 per student per semester rate.

Through SWWC, teachers have



the opportunity to develop fully online courses. Once a course has been approved as an offering of SWWC, the developing teacher is the facilitator of the course. Students who are not enrolled in the host district pay the course enrollment fee to SWWC. \$300.00 of this enrollment fee is then paid to the host district. It is between the individual district and online course instructor to work out how the \$300.00 is distributed. Students that are enrolled in the host district pay a \$10.00 enrollment fee to take the online course.

SSC also provides training, opportunity and Moodle space for teachers to house blended or hybrid courses on our own Moodle site, which is separate from the SWWC Online Learning Community Program site. Individuals facilitating a blended course on SSC's Moodle site are required to complete a SSC hosted Moodle training. Introductory Moodle training series will be offered later this spring and during the summer so watch for these upcoming dates.

Distance education continues on the next page

Distance education continued from page 2

Each training series will include an initial face-to-face session followed by a week for individuals to work in the Moodle learning management system and a final face-to-face session.

To access the SWWC Online Learning Community District Enrollment Form and further information related to the program, visit our website at www.ssc.coop or contact Kari

Kubicek at (507)281-6668 or kkubicek@ssc.coop.

BrainHoney...one access point for all your teaching tools

by Kari Kubicek

SSC continues to offer its districts the opportunity to access BrainHoney, a learning management system (LMS) that not only can be used as an instructional tool for teachers in an online environment, but also offers collaborative tools that facilitate individuals, classes, professional learning communities (PLCs), and much more.



State standards are built directly into the BrainHoney platform, allowing for easy access and alignment as courses are developed. This curriculum mapping function provides space for users to set objectives first before bringing in assessments and activities that align with those targets. BrainHoney also features interoperability with other LMS systems. Courses

developed in Moodle, Blackboard or other LMS systems are easily transferrable to BrainHoney without losing course content.

SSC has negotiated low BrainHoney site license fees for its member districts. If interested in learning more about this opportunity, please contact Kari Kubicek at kkubicek@ssc.coop or (507)281-6668

Online professional development options with KDS



Districts across the country need to meet the challenge of how to best deliver and manage professional development for their educators.

Knowledge Delivery Systems (KDS) has partnered with Southeast Service Cooperative to earn educators clock hours (CEUs) towards the 125 hour

state license recertification requirement. KDS Online Professional Development allows districts to harness technology in order to deliver, assess, and track high quality training at a reduced cost.

Using the KDS eLearning Classroom, teachers can instantly access online, self paced courses in a diverse assortment of educational topics produced by nationally acclaimed educators, including Charlotte Danielson, Robyn Jackson, Jay McTighe,

Susan Winebrenner, Todd Whitaker, and many others.

KDS' Minnesota State License Recertification Program courses consist of five topics, each including an online video-based lecture, pre- and post-assessment questions, and optional discussion board participation. (Printable study guides and resources included.)

[Click here for more information.](#)

Adverse risk selection: The common adversary of pool management

by Bill Colopoulos



As the school pool health plan year approaches, new attention is focused on Education Minnesota's endorsement of their new, statewide pool being sponsored by PEIP. Ed MN and PEIP are promoting the advantages of the new pool on the basis of size: a pool "of at least 50,000 members" will "improve economies of scale".

Education Minnesota has suggested that PEIP will apply the success of the State Employee's Group Insurance Plan (SEGIP) which uses the same plan designs being offered by PEIP, to lower costs, or at least the rates of future increases.

Unfortunately, neither PEIP nor SEGIP can address the real problem that continues to drive school group employees' and employers' insurance premiums and rate of annual increases upwards. The problem isn't a

matter of pool size, organization or plan design, as Ed MN and PEIP suggests. The problem is *funding*: specifically, the funding districts are financially unable to provide to ensure that a proper balance of their employees' health risk is insured under their health plan. In most districts, family participation is dangerously low; only the less healthy family members are covered because no one else finds the family insurance economical.

The districts are NOT responsible for their funding woes. They only have so much money to spend on healthcare benefits, and most of that money has been traditionally negotiated to go into the pockets of contract union employees, with no differentiation as to whether the employees need single or family coverage.

Most districts have negotiated contracts that fund single employee coverage at or close to 100%, but provide little additional funding for employees who have families to insure. The result is that many, if not most, of our districts' employees with families have been forced to seek family coverage on their own; through their spouse's plan or in the individual market. This has worked somewhat well for employees with younger and/or healthier family members.

Adverse Risk Selection Defined

But not all employees with families have been able to seek coverage successfully – or affordably – outside of their districts' plans. This is especially true for those employees who have less healthy family members; where no spouse coverage alternatives exist. Their only choice for "guaranteed coverage" has been their district's health plan; whose cost they have been forced to pay, no matter how high. But only the high risk families will find paying the high cost of the district plans practical. And the high cost of these high risk families' claims drives up the districts' costs – not only for employees with high risk families - but for ALL employees covered under the district's plan. Over time, the effects of such adverse risk selection cause the districts' costs to accelerate far faster than they otherwise would; further limiting the amount of money that is left over for family coverage funding.

Funding that creates the proper spread of risk is the only answer

No other program can solve the problem of adverse risk selection. Only adequate funding that would enable all normal risk employees with families to enroll in our districts' health plans would prevent and reverse the effects of adverse risk selection.

Adverse risk continues on the next page

Adverse risk continued from page 4

In the meantime, Service Cooperative statewide pools provide fixed costs advantages, and our minimum-maximum renewal formula represents a “best case” scenario from a cost management perspective.

SEGIP: The price of risk stability – and who is paying for it

SEGIP has thus far avoided the problem of adverse risk selection and has enjoyed relatively low rates and cost stability. However, that cost stability has come at a high price that is being paid by all Minnesota taxpayers. It has relied upon the State of Minnesota funding 100% of the cost of single employees and 85-90% of the cost of employees with family coverage. Quite frankly, with the size of the state’s group of employees and its high level of funding, ANY plan design would at least be cost-stable.

PEIP does not come with SEGIP funding

It appears that the PEIP statewide teachers’ pool will have no ability to reduce or eliminate the effects of adverse risk. It will simply institutionalize the current adverse risk selection problem. PEIP will not increase district funding in the pool to the same levels as SEGIP. Without the same funding as SEGIP, PEIP’s pool groups will suffer the effects of adverse risk selection. To the extent Ed MN’s control of the PEIP pool will continue



to promote negotiation of employee-only contributions in their future collectively bargained agreements, the adverse risk selection problem will continue to grow.

Proper spread of risk is all about funding

Unless we can adequately fund our health insurance programs to prevent adverse risk selection, no other pooling scheme or organization can positively affect or stabilize cost outcomes. If it is not possible to adequately fund family coverage in our district programs – as does SEGIP – other alternatives will have to be considered. One would be to systematically assign priority to health plan funding as part of ALL future contract negotiations; providing proportionate funding based on eligible plan *members* rather than collectively bargained employees. This would require that all districts buy health plans that they can afford – as defined by having all employees and their families covered under their plans

with same levels of contribution for each bargaining unit. The other alternative would be to expect Minnesota taxpayers to expand the SEGIP program to allow all public employees into it – and at the current level of SEGIP funding. That would require a considerable expansion in state funding.

Bill Colopoulos is a healthcare economist currently serving as the health benefits consultant for the Southeast Service Cooperative. For more information about this article please contact Bill at 507-206-7419 or bcolopoulos@ssc.coop.

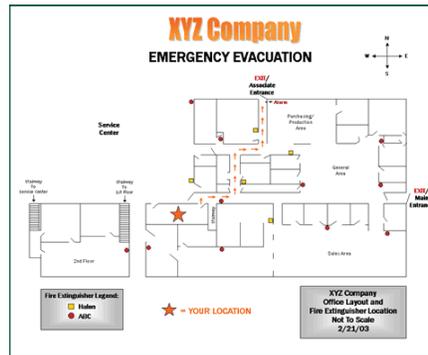
Emergency maps: Crucial for providing a safe environment

by Megan Rooney, IEA

Having a clear emergency action plan for your building is a crucial piece in the puzzle of providing a safe environment for staff, students and visitors occupying a building. As part of that plan, having a posted emergency map where it can be clearly viewed provides a continual refresher of how to respond in an emergency. In a crisis, building occupants may not think clearly, therefore only the basic and most important details should be displayed on posted emergency maps.

A posted emergency map should include the following:

- **Exit routes and shelters** - clear routes based upon the location of occupants and exit doors, including assembly points. Locations appropriate for shelters, or “areas of refuge,” should be clearly marked as well.
- **AED locations** – simple heart symbol in the AED locations identified on the map



- **Fire extinguishers and alarm pulls** – if building is not sprinkled, the locations of pull stations and fire extinguishers should be identified using symbols
- **Exterior door numbers** – having correctly labeled door numbers allows occupants to exit to the appropriate exit door and assembly locations outside the building

The district should also maintain building drawings showing locations of fire prevention equipment as required by MN State Fire Code. Providing this information to the local authorities can aid in swift response during an emergency.

These drawings should identify the following items:

- Exterior fire hydrant and emergency vehicle access
- Secondary exit routes, manual fire alarm boxes, and portable fire extinguishers (if not on posted emergency maps)
- Occupant-use hose stations
- Fire alarm annunciators and controls

An additional recommendation is to mount a sprinkler zone map in the sprinkler riser/valve location to provide emergency responders with efficient water shut off to the building, therefore limiting water damage to building materials.

For more information on emergency maps or Minnesota State Fire Code requirements, please contact IEA at (507) 281-6664.

Free online finance lessons for middle and high school students

Financial literacy is a subject that we need to teach to our students. Through a unique partnership with USA TODAY, teaching students about finances just got easier. Money Matters 101 is a series of free financial literacy lessons that uses real-world examples to teach students about managing finances.

- Based on USA TODAY articles
- Complete with an article reprint, discussion questions and activities
- Written by experienced educators

Available online 24 hours a day
Click on the following link to access the lessons - <http://www.teachersdeservethebest.com/lessonplans.html>



Technology expo continued from page 1

into the daily lives of students and teachers.

Following the keynote, participants broke out into one of four sessions relating to technology in the classroom. Available sessions were: Google Earth, SMART Table, Teaching Wired Learners and Isolation to Innovation, using Social Networking as a Professional Learning Community. The lunch hour provided additional networking opportunities for participants. There was also time to speak with vendors and presenters. In the afternoon, participants chose one of four breakout sessions once again. Offerings included: Teaching Wired Learners,

Comments from expo attendees...

"Loved the humor, enjoyed being brought in, not just talked at."

"So great, so applicable, so interesting, generated good ideas."

"Excellent, kept my attention the whole time, a feat for me!"

"Absolutely fantastic, I look forward to researching the tools we learned about!"

Presentation Tools for Educators, SMART Response and Integrating Technology into Literacy Education.

The Technology in the Classroom Expo was a huge success for both SSC and the participants. We

would like to be able to host an event like this next year. If you were unable to attend this year, watch for an announcement of the date for next year's event!

SSC staff member, Heidi Knepper, elected to NAMTC Board

by Heidi Knepper

SSC staff member Heidi Knepper was recently elected to the NAMTC Board. The National Association of Media & Technology Centers (NAMTC) is an organization committed to promoting leadership among its membership through networking, advocacy, and support activities that will enhance the equitable access to media, technology, and information services to educational communities.

Membership is open to regional, K-12, and higher education media technology centers, as well as commercial vendors.

At Large Representatives are elected for a two year term

that begins at the first general membership meeting on July 1 following their selection; Knepper's term will begin July 1, 2011.

Some of the functions of a board member include; providing written status reports for each issue of the NAMTC newsletter, communicating NAMTC information, issues and concerns to the members within his/her constituency, pursuing memberships within the state or states assigned and contacting members within his/her at large area for input and membership information.

Knepper's hope is that being a member of the board will encourage SSC members to



become NAMTC members by showing what NAMTC can bring to our members, and to increase the participation by those of you who are already members of this great organization. If you have questions about NAMTC, Knepper can be contacted at hknepper@ssc.coop or (507) 281-6669.

Buying power: The advantage of cooperative purchasing

by Katie Schmitt

As I visit with SSC members, I hear how many of your offices are inundated with sales representatives and joint power contract representatives. Everyone wants “a little of your time” and a lot of your business. How do you sift through empty promises and sales jargon to find the best solution for your organization?

Identify the games vendors play

- **Loss Leaders:** Vendors will hook you with low pricing on a commonly purchased item, only to offset their loss with other items you purchase.
- **Shipping Charges:** Vendors offer low pricing on products only to inflate shipping/handling charges.
- **Bait and Switch:** Vendors advertise low priced products, but item is out of stock and the comparable item is available at a higher price.
- **Cold Calls:** Salespeople make the rounds in our region and when they drop-in, their disruption steals valuable time away from more important tasks. They usually work on commission and increase your hard costs as their pay is derived from your purchases.

Explore the hard and soft costs

Hard costs are what you actually pay for a product or service. Soft costs include time spent meeting with vendors, shopping,

processing orders, and paying bills. With budgets shrinking and less staff, time is more and more valuable. There are soft costs associated with changing vendors and in working with several vendors, including: setting up vendor accounts, training billing staff, assisting staff with new or multiple purchasing procedures, and tracking orders and payments. Another impactful soft cost to consider is the staff time involved with bidding, quoting, and comparison shopping.

Focus on overall value

Short-term savings on hot ticket items is often short-sighted. In addition to product price, look at quality, reliability, in-stock availability, exchange and return policy, shipping charges, vendor reputation, customer service, and ease of ordering. These variables will contribute to the overall product value.

Investigate the intentions of buying groups

Occasionally, school districts set up joint power agreements with other schools to increase sales off their vendor contracts. More sales may result in a higher commission for the lead district. The discounted pricing is based on what the lead district purchases; and therefore, the contract is typically established with their best interests in mind. Other joint power groups consist of several school districts; however, only select “member” districts have voting privileges. Participating districts may have little or no voice in



decision-making, minimizing your purchasing power.

Consider customer service and ease of use

The State of Minnesota offers several purchasing contracts to public agencies. Their primary focus is to provide best cost for State entities and many contracts are targeted to specific agencies. Many of our members have found the State’s purchasing program difficult to use. The State cooperative purchasing website is a daunting maze, making it a challenge to find information on products, vendors, and contract renewal dates. When making a purchase, it is not always clear if the item is truly on the State contract. There is no charge to participate in the State’s cooperative purchasing venture; however, they do not advocate on behalf of purchasing participants. Essentially, you are on your own if you run into an issue with a State-contracted vendor.

Embrace your buying power

SSC member buying power is bigger than any one district, city, county, or organization. When purchasing off Minnesota Service Cooperatives (MSC)

Buying power continues on the next page

Buying Power continued from page 8

contracts, members tap into the buying power of 389 districts, 276 cities, 66 counties, and 188 governmental/non-profit agencies. MSC helped members across the state save over \$3.5 million on quality products and services in FY 2009.

With over thirty years of Cooperative Purchasing at SSC, we have loyal members who take advantage of volume purchasing discounts. They are not blindly purchasing, they trust in the long-term investment. They know that each purchase from SSC and MSC contracted vendors ensures their future discounts.

Why Cooperative Purchasing works for members:

- We do the bidding for members. Conducting bids is a time-consuming process. We facilitate bids regionally, state-wide, and nationally to leverage member buying power and ensure best value.
- We meet with members regularly to assess the

program and identify purchasing needs.

- We survey members when making important decisions.
- We work with vendors for our members. If a problem arises, we resolve the issue to our member's satisfaction.
- We offer invoice comparisons for office supplies, product sourcing, and price checking.
- SSC and MSC contracted vendors are reputable.
- Members don't need to meet with numerous vendors – tell solicitors you use SSC vendors!
- Because nearly all pricing is established through a bid process, our contracts provide price and shipping assurance.
- SSC receives administrative fees from vendors to cover the costs incurred in administering the cooperative purchasing program. SSC's re-invests these funds into the program allowing us to add more high-quality contracts, solicit bids, support our commitment

to customer service and member communication, and eliminate the need to increase SSC membership fees or add a service fee to participate in cooperative purchasing. Members enjoy ease of ordering – buy only what you need, when you need it.

- We produce quarterly vendor guides to provide the most current list of available contracts.
- We manage a MSC [member access website](#) which provides: vendor list by name and catalog category, requisition forms of commonly purchased item by members, vendor websites created with contract pricing and product views/descriptions, and essential contacts.
- The goal of MSC Cooperative Purchasing is to provide contracts of overall best value, serving the needs of our members.

Online payment processing with PaySchools

Sponsored by MSBA, MASA, and the Minnesota Service Cooperatives, PaySchools is an online payment processing system that provides schools with an easy and efficient method to collect fees and receive electronic payments for school lunches, field trips, registration, prom tickets, T-shirts and any other school-related fees.

PaySchools makes it possible for all schools to offer parents the

convenience of online purchasing without incurring large administration or setup costs. Online credit card and check collection allows your school to collect fees and creates important reporting and audit controls for your team.

Parents access PaySchools through a link on the home page of their school district's Web site. They select the items they want to purchase and then pay for them using

credit cards or electronic checks.

Payments are automatically processed and the money is transferred to the school's local bank account(s).

Contact Tiffany Rodning at trodning@mnmsba.org or (507) 934-8126 for more information.



2011 Young Authors, Young Artists Conference - Register now!

by Kari Kubicek

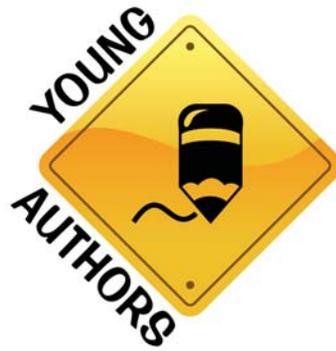
Spring is right around the corner and with it comes Southeast Service Cooperative's annual Young Authors, Young Artists Conference. Each year, hundreds of students in grades 4-6 from public and private schools across southeast Minnesota descend on the Rochester Community and Technical College campus for an exciting opportunity to learn and work with professional authors, poets, playwrights, composers, lyricists, illustrators, novelists, journalists, book crafters, and others.

SSC's Young Authors, Young Artists Conference promotes student engagement in the areas of written and visual communication, and is often an out-of-classroom experience that students remember for an entire lifetime. The upcoming conference is scheduled for May 18 and May 19.

Session topics range from illustrating your own story to book arts to watercolor to storytelling. Presenters this year are a mix of individuals who have presented at the conference in the past and several individuals who are brand new to the conference. We welcome back the following presenters from past conference years: Elizabeth Hurley, Greg Wimmer, Katie Mcky, Mary McGrath, Ryan Jacobson, David LaRochelle, Jay Furst, John

Weiss, Matt Russell, Deidre Webster from Minnesota Book Arts, Margie Kiefer and Pat Ryan.

We also look forward to getting to know our new presenters, including: Kathryn Sullivan, Deb Mercier, Don Houseman, Julie Bowe, Angela Gustafson and Scott Rolfs.



Students enjoying an interactive session at the YAYA conference.

to adult large. Supplies will be limited.

All schools in southeast Minnesota are invited to bring a group of 4-6th graders to the conference for an experience unlike any other. To download a copy of the 2011 Conference brochure, please visit the SSC website at www.ssc.coop. To request a hard copy of the brochure or with any questions, please contact Kari Kubicek at 507-281-6668 or via email at kkubicek@ssc.coop.

The Book Shelf in Winona will once again be organizing our book sale. They will have a wide selection of reading material for students to purchase, including books published by our distinguished presenters.

YAYA t-shirts will also be available for purchase at this year's conference. Cost will be \$10 per shirt and available sizes will range from youth medium

Mobile Science Lab project honored for its innovation

by Amy Grover

At a time when budgets are stretched to their breaking point, local government agencies and schools are forced to make difficult decisions. Many must answer the question: Is there a way to work together, leverage resources, and still provide the same quality of service? The Humphrey School's Public and Nonprofit Leadership Center (PNLC) at the University of Minnesota partnered with the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), the League of Minnesota Cities (LMC), and the Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) to conduct the 2010-2011 Local Government Innovation Awards, which laud outstanding cities, counties, and public schools that use innovative practices to improve local services.

SSC is proud to announce that our Mobile Science Lab project was honored with one of these prestigious awards. Over the past 2 ½ years, SSC, in partnership with the Mayo Clinic and Rochester Math Science Partnership, launched the Mobile Science Lab project. Thanks to funding from HealthForce Minnesota, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, Workforce Development, Inc., Winona State University, AgStar Fund for Rural America, and the Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council, we have developed and deployed two Mobile Science Labs designed to carry state-of-the-art scientific equipment in portable



cabinets directly to high school science classrooms.

The Labs are available to any teacher that has completed the Mayo Clinic Educator Academy, designed to expand molecular biology and genomics, or the one-week session focused on agricultural bioscience. The project has been a resounding success and has reached almost 2,000 high school students in the region. In fact, 91% of participating students indicated that the experience personally impacted them in a positive way (by increasing engagement in their learning, teaching them new skills, and/or increasing awareness of scientific careers). Students reported that using the Mobile Science Lab “changed my opinion of science and biology,” “proved that science is relevant to my life,” “made me curious of other applications of what we worked with,” “got me excited about science,” “helped me learn that I’m good at science,” and “really inspired me.”

At a time when there is so much focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) we are proud that our program is making a difference and having such a positive effect on students. You can learn more about our project on our website at www.ssc.coop.

This year's Local Government Innovation Award winners were selected based on innovations that meet local needs, promote collaboration, improve service delivery, and develop sustainable strategies for service redesign. The awards were given to innovations that have demonstrated growth beyond the conceptual stage and have demonstrated progress and impact. The 13 projects chosen statewide were selected from a pool of 30 nominated by a panel of local officials, Humphrey faculty, and a public affairs journalist. 20% of the score was based on the level of public support for each entry, based on an online voting site. We thank those of you that showed your support, as we received the third highest number of votes amongst the winning projects.

This cycle of awards, together with the recently released Local Government Innovation and Redesign Guide, are part of PNLC's mission to enhance the ability of nonprofit, philanthropic, and public sector organizations to work together—and with the private sector—to advance the common good and serve the public interest. Humphrey Senior Fellow Jay Kiedrowski, former Minneapolis finance director, was quoted in the Star Tribune as saying “I know what city [and school] officials are going through. They know they're going to get cut, they don't know how much, they're already in their fiscal year,

Science Lab continues on the next page

LaCrescent-Hokah 8th grader is Southeast Minnesota Spelling Bee Champion

by Katie Sue Cunningham

Sixty-two students from 38 districts throughout the Southeast Minnesota region advanced from their respective District Spelling Bees to the Regional Spelling Bees. Twelve spellers (six from each Regional Spelling Bee on February 15, 2011) competed in the Final Spelling Bee on Tuesday, March 1, at 9:00 a.m. at the Southeast Service Cooperative in Rochester.

Radhika Edpuganti, an 8th grade student from LaCrescent-Hokah Public Schools was declared the champion after correctly spelling the word *digitalis*.

Radhika advances to the 84th annual Scripps National Spelling Bee on May 30 - June 3, 2011. She won an all-expenses paid trip (for herself and one adult)



Winning spellers (left to right), Casey Olson, Radhika Edpuganti and Shane DeSilva.

to Washington, D.C. (donated by Southeast Service Cooperative and KM Telecom). She also received a first place trophy, *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (provided by Scripps National Spelling Bee) and a \$100 Series EE Savings Bond (donated by Jay Sugarman, Chairman and CEO of iStar Financial in honor of his father, Samuel Louis Sugarman)

and Valerie's *Spelling Bee Supplement Booklet*.

Shane DeSilva, a 4th grade student from Austin Area Catholic Schools, was the 2nd place winner. Shane received a trophy, a *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition* and *Valerie's Spelling Bee Supplement Booklet*.

Casey Olson, a 6th grade student from Mabel-Canton Public Schools, was the 3rd place winner. Casey received a trophy along with *Valerie's Spelling Bee Supplement Booklet*.

The Spelling Bee competitions in southeast Minnesota are sponsored and coordinated by the Southeast Service Cooperative and co-sponsored by KM Telecom.

Science Lab continued from page 11

and they're going to have to make changes. We want them to be able to look at alternatives other than raising property taxes or cutting services. The times require a shift in thinking. They have to look to the third alternative, and the third alternative is to do it better. Many great ideas go unrecognized and unshared. [We are] so busy trying to provide the services, they haven't taken the time to try to receive an award for it."

We would like to congratulate Lakes Country Service Cooperative, SW/WC Service Cooperative, and Olmsted County for their awards as well. All of

the winners, and summaries of their innovations, are listed on the Humphrey Institute's website at www.hhh.umn.edu. Winners will be honored at an awards ceremony from 3 to 5 p.m. on Wednesday, April 13 at the Humphrey Center in Minneapolis. The event is open to the public, and will be followed by an informal reception. To RSVP to the awards, please e-mail heapx004@umn.edu.

MORE INFORMATION:

The Local Government Innovation Awards recognize outstanding cities, counties and schools that demonstrate results in improving local services. The

Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota has partnered with the Association of MN Counties (AMC), the League of Minnesota Cities (LMC), and the MN School Boards Association (MSBA) to conduct the 5th annual Local Government Innovation Awards. The awards are supported financially by their sponsors The Public Strategies Group and Ehlers. Up to 18 awards will be given out (6 to cities, 6 to counties, and 6 to schools)

Note: LGI logo is property of the PNLC

Junior High Knowledge Bowl Teams competed for top places

by Kirsten Kuehl

Fifty teams from 18 districts participated in 2010-11 Junior High Knowledge Bowl. Teams competed in Round Robin competitions in October, November and December. Each team then competed in the Sub-Regional competitions in January and the top twelve teams from each tier advanced to Regional. The competitions consist of 1 written round (60 questions) and 4 oral rounds (45 questions/round).

The Junior High Knowledge Bowl Sub-Regional Competitions were held on January 4-5 at

the Rochester Community and Technical College. The Tier AA teams were from: Dover-Eyota, Goodhue, Kasson-Mantorville, Kenyon-Wanamingo, Pine Island, Plainview-Elgin-Millville, and Red Wing. The Tier A teams were from: Caledonia, Fillmore Central, Glenville-Emmons, Grand Meadow, Houston, Kingsland, Lanesboro, Mabel-Canton, Rushford-Peterson, Southland, and Spring Grove.

The Junior High Knowledge Bowl Regional competitions were held on January 18 and 19 at the Southeast Service Cooperative.



The following teams placed on top at Regionals.

Tier A



Fillmore Central 1 - 1st place



Spring Grove 1 - 2nd place



Kingsland 1- 3rd place

Tier AA



Pine Island 1 - 1st place



Plainview-Elgin-Millville Red - 2nd place



Dover-Eyota 1 - 3rd place

Walking challenge continued from page 1



Staff from Lake City's Bluff View Elementary who participated in the district vs. district walking challenge.

their steps to their district's wellness coordinator who would average out the weekly totals. Districts received weekly step updates from Schultz.

Lake City school nurse and wellness coordinator Johanna Majerus shared that Lake City had 48 people participate in the challenge, or about half of its staff. She was pleased with this number, but felt that participation will be even greater during the next district vs. district challenge. From the first day Majerus informed staff member about the challenge, an aura of friendly competition was in the air.

Many staff members began walking more during the day, before and after school, and comparing amounts on their pedometers. The challenge became a real topic of conversation, with staff members comparing numbers on their pedometers and discussing ways to increase their steps. Some staff members went to even greater lengths to ensure Lake City was the champion, walking up to three hours per day! Johanna was

pleased to see the residual effects of the challenge are still being felt. Participants are still wearing their pedometers and taking to the halls to get extra steps in throughout the day.

Top walkers were awarded prizes, and everyone who participated at Lake City was entered into weekly drawings. Majerus was very impressed with how the community stepped forward by donating prizes for the challenge.

Challenge organizer Marcia Schultz came up with the idea when thinking of ways she could get even more of PEM's employees involved in wellness activities. People had told her how much they enjoyed team challenges, so she figured, "why not make the whole school a team?" Out of 170 employees, PEM had 92 people participate in the district vs. district challenge, which impressed Schultz greatly.

Schultz started her first walking challenge three years ago, with a total of 15 participants. Since PEM is a member of SSC's Health Insurance Pool, they are eligible for yearly mini-grants through SSC's Employee Health Promotion Program. Schultz shared that "taking advantage of this funding has allowed PEM to greatly expand its wellness program." She used these funds to not only fund PEM's participation in the district challenge, but to also fund a variety of other wellness activities including a district-wide wellness bingo contest and various cancer awareness promotions.



PEM Wellness Coordinator Marcia Schultz

Schultz, along with SSC's Health Promotion Coordinator Nicole LaChapelle, will be organizing another district vs. district walking challenge in January 2012 and hope to get even more participation. To get your district involved, contact Nicole LaChapelle at nlachapelle@ssc.coop or (507) 281-6674.

Consider Sand Creek for your employee assistance program



The Sand Creek Group Employee Assistance Program is a safe, comfortable, and confidential resource for employees and their families when they need guidance or advice with the challenges and problems of daily living. The services are designed to help employees assess and resolve issues affecting their personal and/or work life.

The Sand Creek Group offers help with:

- Relationship issues
- Work pressures and conflict
- Depression, anxiety, other mental health concerns
- Parent-child difficulties/ childcare resources
- Alcohol and chemical use problems
- Loss and grief
- Financial crisis or legal concerns
- Many other life concerns

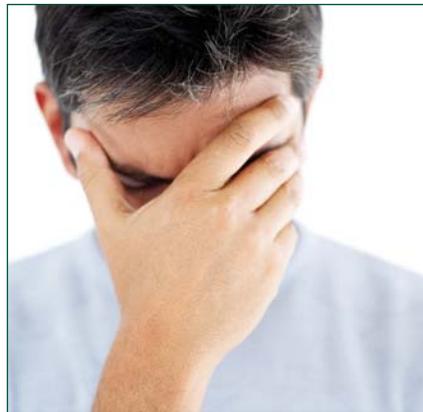
Key facts about our Employee Assistance Program:

24-Hour Telephone Crisis Intervention

Should an emergency occur, help is available every hour of every day, including weekends and holidays.

Confidential

You can use this program with confidence knowing that no one will know you used the program



or anything that was said in your counseling session. The highest level of confidentiality is maintained by the EAP.

Free

Employee Assistance provides assessment, counseling, and referral services for you and your dependents at no charge to you.

Professional

All of the counselors are highly trained, experienced, and licensed employee assistance counselors holding at least a master's degree in the field of psychology, social work, or related behavior health sciences.

Family Coverage

Dependents of employees are eligible to use the program. This includes college students living away from home.

All of us face crisis and have stress in our lives. We offer the Employee Assistance Program to help employees and their families find support and necessary resources when difficult situations arise. Please remember this program is free, professional, and confidential.

Cost to Employer Groups

This program is offered for only \$16 per employee per year for SSC health pool members or \$18 per employee per year for SSC non-health pool members. Optional Work/Life presentations and crisis debriefing are available at \$250 per hour.

Contact: Suzanne Riley, (507) 281-6673, sriley@ssc.coop or Nicole LaChapelle, (507) 281-6674, nlachapelle@ssc.coop

Recent Board meeting actions and information

November 2010

Awarded the custodial supply contract to Arnold's Supply and Kleenit.

Accepted the request of the City of Owatonna for membership in SSC and for participation in the City/County Health Insurance Pool.

Designated the January 26, 2011 Board meeting as the SSC Annual Meeting.

Received and approved the 2009-2010 SSC Annual Report.

December 2010

Adopted the revised Health Insurance Program pool rules as proposed by the Joint Health Pool Planning Committee.

Accepted the request of the South Country Health Alliance for membership in SSC and for participation in the City/County Health Insurance Pool.

Accepted the Elections report of the Canvassing Committee and declared election of the following individuals:

Education Positions: Two new 4-year terms (January 1, 2011 – December 31, 2014):

Michael Christenson, Red Wing and Brian Grudem, Zumbrota-Mazeppa Schools.

Government Position – One position in a 2-year term to fill a vacancy (January 1, 2011 – December 31, 2012): Theresa A. Arrick-Kruger, Houston County.

Recognized and thanked Mitch Lentz, Tom Heise, and Al Cordes for their years of service as active SSC Board members, each having

served on several committees and as officers during their terms.

Chairman Lentz appointed Carol Cravath to complete Tom Heise's term through 6/30/12 to serve a new 4-year term effective January 1, 2011 on the MSC Board.

Accepted a mini-grant of \$500 from Olmsted County's SHIP program Wellness Works to support the SSC employee group's participation in a Community Supported Agriculture program.

Scheduled the pre-meeting, Annual Meeting, and regular meeting times on January 26, 2011.

Accepted the resignation of Dianne Dodge effective January 3, 2011 and thanked her for her dedicated and expert technical assistance to southeast Minnesota schools.

Adopted a revision of SSC's policy Harassment and Violence to change the language of the "purpose" paragraph as recommended by MSBA and to make it consistent with other SSC policies.

January 2011

Held the Annual Meeting, including a review of the Annual Report 2009-2010, Annual Plan 2010-2011, 2009-2010 Member Participation Study and Values Report, and list of 2010-2011 Strategic Planning Goals, financial update, organizational and milestone achievements.

Set the schedule for regular Board meetings through January 2012.

Election of Officers for the Year 2010. The following individuals were elected to offices:

Carol Cravath - Chairperson
Don Andring - Clerk
Peggy Merkel - Vice-Chairperson
Sue Phillips - Treasurer

Chair Cravath made appointments for 2011 to the following committees: Finance Committee, Personnel Committee, Policies Committee, By-Laws Committee.

February 2011

Accepted the settlement report for the 2009-2010 School Health Insurance Pool.

Credited calculated excess claims fund for the one eligible group - SSC Employee Group - in the amount of \$7,036.50. Dedicated \$1,750 of the SSC employee group claims margin return to fund employee wellness incentives over two years; and distributed the remaining \$5,286.50 into the VEBA accounts of current group participating employees.

Authorized the Executive Director to open the position of AYP School Improvement Coordinator.

Accepted the 2011-2012 technology plan update as presented.

Future meetings of the SSC Board of Directors are scheduled as follows:

Wednesday, March 23
Wednesday, April 27
Wednesday, May 25
Wednesday, June 22

Note: Complete SSC Board of Directors meeting minutes are available on the SSC website at www.ssc.coop

Calendar

March

Senior High Knowledge Bowl Regional - Tier A

March 17
8:30 AM - 2:30 PM

Senior High Knowledge Bowl Regional - Tier AA

March 18
8:30 AM - 2:30 PM

SMART Board Basics 1

March 22
4:00 - 7:00 PM

Incorporating WebQuests (Grades 7 - 12)

March 23
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Incorporating WebQuests (Grades K - 6)

March 23
12:30 - 3:30 PM

SSC Board Meeting

March 23
5:30 - 8:00 PM

Google Applications for Education (Grades 7 - 12)

March 28
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Google Applications for Education (Grades K - 6)

March 28
12:30 - 3:30 PM

SMART Board Basics 2

March 29
4:00 - 7:00 PM

Building Lessons Around Digital Content (Grades 7 - 12)

March 30
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Building Lessons Around Digital Content (Grades K - 6)

March 30
12:30 - 3:30 PM

April

An Introduction to VoiceThread (Grades 7 - 12)

April 1
9:00 AM - 3:30 PM

An Introduction to VoiceThread (Grades K - 6)

April 1
12:30 - 3:30 PM

SMART Board Basics 1

April 5
4:00 - 7:00 PM

Teaching with BrainHoney (part 1)

April 5
4:00 - 7:00 PM

SMART Board Basics 2

April 14
8:30 - 11:30 AM

SMART Board Basics 1

April 19
8:30 - 11:30 AM

Federal Grants 101 - US DOE & Senator Franken

April 21
8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Regional Freshwater Event

April 26
1:00 PM - Judging
7:00 PM - Awards Ceremony

SMART Board Basics 2

April 26
4:00 - 7:00 PM

SSC Board Meeting

April 27
5:30 - 8:00 PM

AAC Meeting

April 28
12:00 - 3:30 PM

May

MASA 1 Meeting

May 2
11:00 AM - 3:30 PM

Elementary SMART User Group

May 10
4:00 - 6:00 PM

SSC Board Meeting

May 25
5:30 - 8:00 PM

AAC Meeting

May 26
12:00 - 3:30 PM



SSC is a 2010 Recipient of the Alfred P. Sloan Award for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility.

Cooperative Connection is a publication of the Southeast Service Cooperative, published four times per year for members, associates, and the general public.
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www.ssc.coop

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Southeast Service Cooperative direct dial phone numbers, e-mails, and 800

- Call toll free, 1-800-657-6996, then an option:
- 1..... Cooperative Purchasing
 - 2..... Dental Reimbursement
 - 3..... Staff Development
 - 4..... EHSM
 - 5..... Student Academics & Conferences

We want to be there when you call, so try dialing us directly at the numbers below. Our voice mail system allows you to leave a detailed message if the person you're calling isn't able to answer right away. If you don't know who you need to talk with, dial (507) 288-1282 and one of our staff or our auto-attendant will direct you from there. To send a fax dial (507) 288-7663.

	name	phone	email	service area
SSC Staff	Suzanne Riley	(507) 281-6673	sriley@ssc.coop	Executive Director
	Katie Sue Cunningham	(507) 281-6667	kcunningham@ssc.coop	Program Assistant/Certified SMART Board Trainer
	Amy Grover	(507) 281-6693	agrover@ssc.coop	Program and Planning Manager
	Chris Hancock	(507) 281-6671	chancock@ssc.coop	Accounting Assistant
	Kathy Hartman	(507) 281-6685	khartman@ssc.coop	School Improvement Coordinator
	Heidi Knepper	(507) 281-6669	hknepper@ssc.coop	Director of Planning and General Admin.
	Kari Kubicek	(507) 281-6668	kkubicek@ssc.coop	Program Coordinator
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SSC Consultants

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Natalie Nagel	(507) 281-6688	natalie.nagel@ieainstitute.com	Support
Angie Radel	(507) 281-6682	angie.radel@ieainstitute.com	Senior Project Manager
Pat Weir	(507) 281-6677	pat.weir@ieainstitute.com	Regional Manager

SSC's new online registration system - Making it easier than ever to register for sessions



various professional development sessions.

Creating an account on the system just takes a few minutes, and from there members simply add the session they are interested in to their "cart." Participants will also soon be able to use credit cards as a payment method.

SSC has recently launched its new online registration system. This has made it easier than ever for our members to register quickly and easily for SSC's

To view the online calendar of our current learning opportunities go to www.ssc.coop.

Thinking SPRING at SSC!



We are thinking positive and have just unveiled our new wet umbrella bags in the Wood Lake Meeting Center. That means the snow must be over for the season, correct?