



# THE REVIEW

WWW.SWSC.ORG

## NASA TRAVELING EXHIBIT ENJOYED BY MANY

Submitted by Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

Special features at the recent Science & Nature Conference were several different exhibits from the NASA Glenn Research Center in Cleveland, Ohio. They included a 1/6 scale inflatable space shuttle which was approximately 30' tall, panel exhibits on the Apollo mission and the Hubble Telescope, table top models of a Mars Exploration Rover, space shuttle, Apollo trainer space suit, an interactive glove box, space food packages and some lunar samples.



The exhibits served as a backdrop to the keynote presentation at the conference and also were viewed during a class that included hands-on activities. Students especially enjoyed using the interactive glove box where they slid their hands into the gloves and then tried to manipulate small items.

Community members were invited to view this unique display during an evening event held at Southwest Minnesota State University. Three sessions of the planetarium show on "Black Holes" were also part of the event and free tickets were distributed in a hurry. The show, in Marshall for a limited time, used the latest in full-dome 3D animation visualization technology. SMSU is the only planetarium in the region with full dome video and

full dome colored laser! The event was a huge success with attendance estimated at over 650 people from Marshall and the surrounding area.

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## CONGRATULATIONS TO AREA SCHOOLS

Once again, we are reminded about the high quality education provided in southwest and west central Minnesota. When U.S. News & World Report released its "Best High Schools" report, we had **EIGHT** schools on that list!! Congratulations to those schools who made the **bronze medal** list: **Buffalo Lake-Hector, Lac qui Parle Valley, Lakeview, Luverne, Mountain Lake, Ortonville, Pipestone Area, and Tracy.** Congratulations to the School Boards, Superintendents, and staff of these districts on achieving this honor!

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## **FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

“Shared Services: Cost Sharing for Schools, Cities, Counties, and Other Governmental Agencies”

Recently, I was reading the findings of an interesting piece of research completed by Deloitte Research called “Driving More Money into the Classroom: The Promise of Shared Services.”

My heightened interest in this research was due to the complexity around the answer to a very simple question, a question I am often asked when I tell people I work for the SW/WC Service Cooperative (SW/WC SC). More often than not, I receive a somewhat blank stare until I respond by saying, “I work with the ECSU”. Then I receive an affirmative head bob and typically the response is “oh, you work for the ECSU!”

However, there is still that often asked and yet unanswered question, “What does the SW/WC SC do?”

You would think there would be a very simple answer to this question, however, the SW/WC SC provides countless services from special education to school improvement; from health insurance to cooperative purchasing; and, from networking to technology integration.

So what did this research have to do with my issues around what it is that the SW/WC SC does for its members? In its most basic understanding, we provide shared services for our members in an effort to 1) provide access to programs and services that cannot easily be accessed alone, and 2) to provide programs and services in a cost saving way so that more dollars can be used for expenses related to the overall operations of the local governmental entities.

How does the SW/WC SC help schools “drive money into the classroom” or help local governmental entities save?

By implementing shared services, the SW/WC SC makes it possible for our schools, cities, counties, and other governmental agencies to create the economies of scale and buying power of larger governmental entities. How?

1. By sharing a Special Education Director, school districts “pool” their resources and purchase this service from the SW/WC SC. This gives the school district access to high quality leadership they could not afford on their own or at a cost that would take money from the classroom.
2. By implementing a “shared services” model, our member schools share in the expense of managing the financial operations of their district. Our school members share in the development and maintenance costs of proprietary software that is used for finance, human resources, and student reporting requirements.
3. By participating in a health insurance pool, our city, county, other governmental agency, and school members receive access to high quality health insurance leveraged by a state-wide purchasing model.

The implementation of shared services in these, and many other examples, helps our members to save money, operate more efficiently, and in the end, “drive dollars into the classroom” or save tax payers money! It is through this model of “shared services” that the SW/WC SC successfully serves its school, city, county, and other governmental agency members.



## RIISING ENERGY COSTS A REALITY

Energy represents as much as 30 percent of a building's operating costs. Government agencies in the United States spend more than \$10 billion a year on energy to provide public services and meet constituent needs. For America's primary and secondary schools alone, **the annual energy cost is a staggering \$6 billion—more than is spent on textbooks and computers combined!** A quarter of this amount, \$1.5 billion, could be saved through smarter energy management. Many school districts have already reaped tremendous benefits by incorporating energy-efficient equipment and undertaking energy retrofits. **Such measures can save individual districts thousands of dollars every year.**



*The ultimate resource for objective facility solutions*

In another article, "Myths about Energy in Schools," the United States Department of Energy, points-out "that in many school districts energy costs are second only to salaries, often exceeding the cost of supplies and books." Unfortunately, nearly one-third of the energy used to run a typical government building goes to waste—waste that costs taxpayer's money. The least efficient schools use three times more energy than the most efficient schools. Taking appropriate steps to increase energy efficiency can translate into a savings of 40 cents per square foot or more when compared to the least efficient schools.

Evidence is also growing that "Energy-Efficient Schools can provide learning environments that lead to improved student performance," In part, the link between smart energy use and improved learning is intuitive. If lighting quality is poor, students may have trouble reading; if they cannot hear teachers over noise through leaky walls and windows; or over noisy mechanical equipment; or if they can't concentrate if they're roasting or freezing in classrooms with poor temperature control it seems logical that Energy-Efficient Schools will certainly lead to better student performance.

Working side by side with **Energy Services Group (ESG)** you can reduce your district's energy bills. Last month, the US Energy Information Administration forecasted that heating oil costs are likely to jump 22 percent this winter. The agency said that customers who heat with natural gas pay higher bills as well. Energy-efficient equipment will both reduce annual maintenance costs and will also conserve finite resources while at the same time can improve indoor air quality. We believe that by following our recommendations districts will provide better **Learning Environments** that will ultimately lead to better test scores. Also, savings from these recommendations are proven—**typically reducing annual utility bills by an average of over 20 percent!**

Your Service Cooperative has entered into a partnership agreement with **ESG** to provide facility energy audits and facility management planning services for member districts as they look to plug those facility leaks and increase the comfort and safety of indoor environments. **ESG** is headquartered in Wayzata, Minnesota and is an independent (vendor neutral) "fee for service" engineering/construction management firm specializing in the design of objective cost effective facility management solutions to improve facility performance.

**ESG** will provide Service Cooperative Member Districts a Complimentary Preliminary Facility Assessment at "NO CHARGE". This includes an analysis of your major systems (mechanical, electrical, plumbing, envelope, etc), a utility usage profile and a report of findings and recommendations. In addition, Service Cooperative districts will receive a 10% discount on comprehensive detailed facilities audit to further aid in the facility/energy planning process.

If you would like to know more about this opportunity, please contact Luther Heller at the SW/WC Service Cooperative. Or, you can contact one of **ESG** company representatives, retired Superintendent, Dennis Drummond at 218.342.3831 or send an email to Dennis at [dennis.drummond@1esg.com](mailto:dennis.drummond@1esg.com).

## UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

- March 5th—Effective Parental Involvement—Worthington**
- March 6th—Effective Parental Involvement—Willmar**
- March 10th—Brain Injury Basics—Marshall**
- March 13th-14th—Business Conference—SMSU in Marshall**
- March 14th—Teacher Observation II—Marshall**
- March 26th—Coaching Skills for Educators—Marshall**
- March 28th—Visual Phonics I—Marshall**
- May 15th—Teacher Leadership II—Marshall**
- June 18th-19th—(In)Formative Assessments—Marshall**

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## RESOLUTION: A YEAR OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

By Meg Litts, Coordinator of Curriculum,  
Assessment and Instruction

Happy New Year! Okay, for those of us who live and breathe 'school', January does not necessarily mark the 'new year.' Yet, though it is technically the middle of the school year, it is an important time for looking ahead to the new school year—2008-2009. School calendars, capital outlay, and staffing decisions are all on the administrative agendas as we prepare to move towards the end of this school year, through summer activities, and into the academic 'new year'.



Inasmuch as we appreciate the cycle of the seasons that move us through the year, so too the continuous improvement cycle moves us through the school calendar. One name for this cycle W. E. Deming made famous is the Shewhart Cycle—Plan, Do, Check, Act.

The Teaching and Learning Division staff at the SW/WC Service Cooperative are committed to supporting the schools and districts through the continuous improvement process.

### **Plan—Where are we? What are the areas for improvement? Look at the data.**

Data Retreats, Data Walks, Making Use of the Data, Curriculum Mapping

### **Do—Make it happen! Implement improvement plan strategies.**

School/District Improvement Planning, Quality Indicator Needs Assessment, NWEA MAP Test Training & Coaching, Instructional Strategies, Content Area Workshops, ELL Consulting, Curriculum Coordination

### **Check—How's it going? Collect data again to monitor how the efforts are going.**

Professional Learning Communities, Progress Monitoring, Data Retreats/Revisits, Danielson's Framework for Teaching

### **Act—What have we learned? Monitor, adjust, embed cultural changes system-**

**wide.** Unpacking and Aligning the Standards, Data Analysis, Action Planning  
Revisited

Unlike the seasons, the stages of the Continuous Improvement Cycle are not static but fluid. You can begin at any time, and revisit stages that may provide greater depth and understanding throughout the process.

Contact the Teaching and Learning Staff to help you make your staff development plans more dynamic through continuous school improvement activities.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the School Improvement and Curriculum/Assessment/Instruction Departments is to be a valuable partner with our member districts in their efforts to provide quality education by:

- Recognizing and responding to local needs of member schools and districts
- Building effective relationships with administration and teaching staff
- Building capacity and creating sustainability for a continuous school improvement process
- Working collaboratively with other SW/WC SC programs and staff



## PLC + RTI= ENHANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING

by Marlene Rabenberg and Laurie Varley, Adrian Schools

Adrian Elementary School embarked on the journey toward making Response to Intervention a part of their school. The first step in that effort was to set up a system which encouraged all the staff to be integral participants. Our administrator, Mr. Lofthus, encouraged this process by suggesting time during the school day when teams could meet. Two Professional Learning Communities were formed. The Lower Elementary Learning Community consists of the K-2 teachers, a special education teacher, and the reading specialist. The Intermediate Learning Community consists of the grade 3-5 classroom teachers, our math specialist and a special education teacher. The teams meet weekly from 7:50-8:20 a.m.

During this time the students are arriving at school. Our principal has been taking the K-2 group or the 3-5 group and reading to them or discussing Character Traits with them. This has worked very well and the students look forward to this time! An administrator's support for this program is vital to its success. At times he will also be attending the community meetings so paraprofessionals will then be involved with the students.

What do we do in the Professional Learning Community time? The facilitator of the group produces an agenda that is created with input from the community members. The agenda may include looking at data; it also may include discussion of problems of the classrooms or of at-risk students. Notes are taken and kept so the process keeps its professional outlook.

Peg Faber, a second grade teacher and a member of the Primary Learning Community, said, "Learning communities are great because it gives us the opportunity to share with fellow teachers. It's something that we have been wanting to do for many years."

These groups will lead to using Response to Intervention techniques. The staff will look at interventions and plan which resources will be used to help students do their best. We presently do NWEA testing, AIMS for K-5, and the statewide assessments so we have multiple sets of data to consider. We are being trained in understanding the data and in what we are to do with the data.

"The whole process makes a lot of sense. When we all work together, we learn from each other and can share the knowledge and expertise that we all have. I'm excited to see where the future takes us. We are very lucky to have this opportunity to meet and learn together," said Laurie Varley, the facilitator for the Intermediate Community. These are all "steps" for us. We have found it is far better to "learn and grow" than to "sit and wait" because we want the very best for our students. We are on the road to success for both students and teachers!

## COOPERATIVE PURCHASING

The Cooperative Purchasing Program is dedicated to combining the collective purchasing power of our members in order to receive the best value in goods and services. By working cooperatively, on a regional and statewide level, each of our members will benefit by purchasing goods and services at a lower cost than if individually purchasing those same things. When choosing vendors, the Cooperative Purchasing program focuses on quality, service, and support, as well as competitive pricing. The goal of our program is to have our members receive the best long-term value possible. Consider the Cooperative Purchasing Staff your district's personal shopper. Contact Debra Foley, Sales/Marketing Associate at [debra.foley@swsc.org](mailto:debra.foley@swsc.org) or 507-537-2279.

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## SCHOOL UPDATES...

### SAFE AND DRUG FREE

Sleepy Eye Public Elementary School students dedicated one week to become "Safe and Drug Free". Students in grades 1-6 participated in many activities throughout the week. A few of those activities included classroom guidance lessons filled with many fun activities and important information about ways to stay safe and say no to drugs. Also, all students signed a poster stating "Our School is too Cool to Do Drugs", which helped the students visually see the power of how one Elementary school can stop the trends of adolescents in our community.

Students were also asked to wear their sweats to school to roll model the idea that saying no to drugs is no sweat. All students who wore sweats were given a sticker stating "Saying no to drugs is no Sweat", to symbolize that wearing sweats to school is easy and that staying safe and drug free can be easy too!



### MACCRAY HOSTING S.M.A.R.T. TRAINING

**MACCRAY WILL BE HOSTING A S.M.A.R.T. TRAINING WORKSHOP. THE 4-DAY TRAINING WILL TAKE PLACE FROM TUESDAY, JUNE 10, THROUGH, FRIDAY, JUNE 13, IN CLARA CITY.**

S.M.A.R.T (Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training) is a multi-sensory approach to learning based on brain research..

The program develops physiological and neurological readiness skills essential to classroom success. The S.M.A.R.T. program, also known as Boost-Up, emphasizes stimulating the brain stem to promote richer connections among the neurons. The brain stem controls the neurological capabilities for readiness skill development. Once these readiness skills are in place, children have the foundation necessary to succeed in school. The S.M.A.R.T. program is designed so each child progresses at his/her own rate, enhancing the child's abilities in a positive and playful environment.

S.M.A.R.T. integrates activities into the classroom, gymnasium, and playground and is compatible with any curriculum. The program is related to the areas of language development, reading, math, writing, physiological readiness and coordination and attention.



To learn more about S.M.A.R.T. and registration information: contact MLRC (Minnesota Learning Resource Center) at [www.themlrc.org](http://www.themlrc.org) or 612-706-5549.

## HEARTLAND GIRLS RANCH SCHOOL RECEIVES FUNDS TO START BUSINESS



The Heartland Girls Ranch School, a program of the SW/WC Service Cooperative, recently received two grants—one is a \$5,000 grant from CORE—the Center of Rural Entrepreneurship at SMSU in Marshall, and the other is a \$5,000 gift from Tastefully Simple. The Heartland Girls Ranch School is located at the Benson Junior-Senior High School. The School teaches girls ages 12-19 from all around Minnesota. The majority of these girls have been court ordered to the Heartland Girls Ranch Correctional Program.

The girls who are enrolled in the Work-Based Learning Class are starting up their own business doing custom embroidery for the community. They have the desire to work on skills that would prepare them for working situations beyond high school. The girls have a strong desire to give back to the community by opening a business that will reach a broad range of customers.

The girls will operate “In Stitches” daily from 1:30-3:30 p.m. Several businesses and the Benson High School are already interested in having the girls sew their logos on shirts and hats. One local business, which also does embroidery, is very supportive of the new business and helped the girls pick out a machine to fit the business’ needs. Stipulations of the CORE grant involve the girls’ learning what it takes to start up the business. They will go through the essentials of finding a market, developing a business plan, developing a marketing plan and learning about the financials of the business. The SMSU SIFE group will help the girls with these activities. Each of the girls will be responsible for some “division” of the company, which puts the responsibility on them to do their part in making this business survive. The girls plan to do their own advertising for the business. They will work with the local newspaper and radio, and post fliers around the community. They also plan to set up a booth at school activities to promote the business. The girls look forward to making enough money to be able to buy another machine to do even more business. They will also look at reinvesting the profits of the company. Please contact Terri Collins at [institches@heartlandgirlsranh.org](mailto:institches@heartlandgirlsranh.org) or 320-842-2712. We appreciate your support in helping our business grow!

So much has happened in our school since I wrote my last review; I’m not sure where to begin. By now, it’s common knowledge that **LAKE BENTON** will no longer be supporting a K-12 school. This sounds unfortunate; however, we are looking at the future with a significant amount of hope and optimism. On December 11<sup>th</sup>, our community generously voted in support of a referendum that will allow us to update and build onto our current building. The new school will house our students in grades Preschool-6<sup>th</sup>. Along with that, our school board has been working diligently to finalize a tuition agreement for our students in grades 7-12 with the Elkton School District.

All that being said, our students are continuing to be active in activities both in and out of the classroom. The cold weather has prompted our elementary staff to generate a walking program during indoor recess to help promote healthy lifestyles for our children. The students are able to earn recognition and prizes for every five miles they walk. This has generated a lot of excitement as the students head into the gym for recess.

The teachers in my district are currently building the foundation to fully implement RtI (Response to Implementation) in the 2008-2009 school year. They are attending trainings, outlining plans, and collecting bench mark data. It will be great to see the process fully into play next school year. I feel strongly that our students will benefit from the changes that we will make to implement the process.

As the cold weather turns into raining spring days you will find the students and staff at Lake Benton preparing for a final exit in the current building. In the short time I’ve come to know these individuals, I can assure you that the transition will be one worth paying attention to. There is always something positive happening and we will continue to make great things happen here all school year.

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## THE CHILDREN'S AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR PROGRAM

### Residencies Scheduled In Elementary Schools

Submitted by Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

Schedules have been set for residencies by authors/illustrators as part of the Children's Author & Illustrator Program. The residencies are scheduled during the weeks of April 14 – 18 and April 28 – May 2. Thirty elementary schools are participating in this year's program. The presenters and the schools they are working with are listed below.



*Lynne Jonelle*

Benson, BOLD, Canby, Dawson-Boyd, Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg, MACCRAY East and West, Yellow Medicine East—Bert Raney and H. A. Hagg



*Joni Oeltjenbruns*

Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa, Glencoe-Silver Lake, Hutchinson—Park and West, Milroy, Paynesville, and the Wabasso Public Library hosting the Public School and St. Anne's.



*Jim Postier*

Balaton, Cedar Mountain, Edgerton, Lincoln HI, Marshall—Holy Redeemer, Middle, Park Side and West Side, Minneota, Pipestone—Dolson Hill, Redwood—Reede Gray, RTR and Westbrook—Walnut Grove

If you have questions about the Children's Author and Illustrator Program, please contact Sue Gorecki (sue.gorecki@swsc.org or 507-537-22858) or Andrea Anderson (andrea.anderson@swsc.org or 507-537-2257).

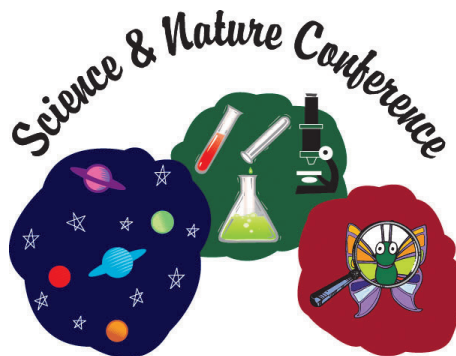


## LARGEST AUDIENCE EVER FOR SCIENCE & NATURE CONFERENCE

Submitted by Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

Over 1,000 students, teachers, parents and presenters attended the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Science & Nature Conference on January 8 at Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall. Students from the following thirty-one schools participated in this annual event: BBE, Benson, Clarkfield Charter, Dawson-Boyd, ECHO Charter, Heron Lake-Okabena, Hills-Beaver Creek, KMS, Lac qui Parle Valley, Lakeview, MACCRAY, Marshall, Marshall Area Christian School, Milroy, Minneota, Montevideo, Murray

County Central, New London-Spicer, Paynesville, Renville County West, Red Rock Ridge ALC, Round Lake-Brewster, RTR, Sleepy Eye, Sleepy Eye – St. Mary's, Southwest Star Concept, Wabasso, Willmar, Windom, Worthington, and Yellow Medicine East. During the welcome and opening remarks, Buzz Lightyear made a surprise appearance!



**BUZZ LIGHTYEAR**

The audience enjoyed the keynote – "Robots Explore Our Solar System" – presented by Jay Reynolds, a member of the NASA Glenn Research Speakers Bureau in Ohio. Reynolds told participants that robots are currently traveling to a comet, another is heading to visit two asteroids, four are leaving our solar system, one is en route to Mercury and another is flying *super-fast* to our favorite dwarf planet "Pluto"! Participants learned how robots work, how NASA talks to them, what they tell NASA, etc.

After the general session, participants attended three hands-on classes where they learned about the science of sound, experimented with small wind turbines to learn about wind energy, received a quick course in astronomy and learned tricks of stargazing, built a volcano, had fun with kitchen chemistry, played games to understand how nature works, made a glacier out of ice cream (and got to eat it too!), attended a class on grossology, explored digital photography, learned about animals with undeserved bad reputations, came face to face with

some of the scariest and creepiest animals, made goofy putty, wrote their name in hieroglyphics, attended planetarium shows, watched a wacky professor demonstrate science concepts, and much more! Pictures of students in the various classes are available on our website (see below) through the **Photo Gallery** link.

Information on this and the other two student conferences – Young Artists in October and Young Writers in May – is available on our website: [www.swsc.org](http://www.swsc.org) or [www.swscedservices.org](http://www.swscedservices.org). If you have questions, contact Sue Gorecki ([sue.gorecki@swsc.org](mailto:sue.gorecki@swsc.org) or 507-537-2258) or Andrea Anderson ([andrea.anderson@swsc.org](mailto:andrea.anderson@swsc.org) or 507-537-2257).



**KITCHEN CHEMISTRY**



**WIND ENERGY**



**GRUNTS AND SQUEALS**

## YOUNG WRITERS CONFERENCE



Mark your calendar – the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference for Young Writers is May 13 at Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall. Conference brochures will be distributed in early March. The **Early Bird Registration Deadline is April 8**, with the **Final Registration Deadline on April 15**. NO registrations are accepted after the final deadline so mark your calendar and plan accordingly.



Stuart Stotts

This year's keynote speaker is Stuart Stotts, singer, storyteller and author from DeForest, Wisconsin. We're looking forward to the keynote presentation and expecting an enjoyable experience for all participants. Children and adults come away from Stotts' presentations feeling good. One third grader said, ***"This is better than recess!"*** Teachers and principals respond with similar enthusiasm, to the messages, the humor and to the attentiveness and involvement of the students. As one middle school student wrote afterward, ***"I thought you would be boring, but you ROCK!"*** A counselor wrote ***"Stuart Stotts is exceptional. He is extremely skilled at understanding development levels of children - i.e., what works to maintain attention and have fun!"***

At the conference, students in grades 3-8 are introduced to authors, illustrators, and other types of communicators. Through interaction with presenters, students discover their creative abilities and how to express their thoughts. The hands-on classes relate to writing, editing, publishing, illustrating, cartooning, storytelling, etc.

Many parents are willing to pay the registration fee if the school can provide a chaperone and transportation. We also have many parents register and bring their children. We appreciate any assistance school staff provides in getting information on this event out to parents. Last year's event drew about 650 participants and we are anticipating an increase this year!

## SUBMIT A SUCCESS STORY AND EARN A CHANCE TO WIN A PRIZE!

Submitted by Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

The Student Activities Program at the SW/WC Service Cooperative is attempting to collect "success stories". Conference participants often express their thanks for a great conference or a specific class, etc. We are looking for a brief story that describes how a SW/WC Service Cooperative conference, program, or competition has made an impact on a student. The story can be about someone from the last conference or from past years. If you submit a story, you are eligible to win a Southwest Minnesota State University Mustangs T-shirt. We will draw for prizes and distribute them before the end of the school year.

The form is available on our website: [www.swscedservices.org](http://www.swscedservices.org). Scroll over Student Activities on the left and then click on Science & Nature on the drop-down menu. Scroll down to find "Success Story". Click on the item to open it and then complete the form. You can email, mail or fax it to our office; the information is included on the form.

## SW MN TECHNICAL SKILLS CHALLENGE 2008

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS**  
***APRIL 30, 2008***

**FINAL EVENT HELD AT MN WEST CAMPUS**  
**GRANITE FALLS**



**Competitions Planned for 2007-08 School Year:**

- Accounting
- Child Development - NEW
- Digital Photography
- Graphic Design
- Public Service Announcement – Video
- Pick-a-Path Web Story Creation

Hands-on activities and demonstrations will also be offered throughout the day. A more complete list will be available in the registration materials.

**Registration Materials Now Available**

- Individual & team competitions, awards & prizes!
- Submit projects ANYTIME during the school year, so they can be done when it fits into your curriculum! (We will store the project until the final event, when students attend & it will be judged).
- On-Site competitions also - prepare ahead of time, attend the final event & compete.
- Early Bird registration: \$10 per student if received by April 10<sup>th</sup>. After April 10, registration cost will be \$20 per student. No registrations accepted after April 20, 2008.

Comments & Questions can be directed to:  
Mary Lou Blasing, 507-537-2273 or [marylou.blasing@swsc.org](mailto:marylou.blasing@swsc.org)

Check our website for registration materials & more info: [www.lifetimeoflearning.com](http://www.lifetimeoflearning.com)



## CULINARY SKILLS CHALLENGE

**March 26, 2008\***

Location: Southwest Minnesota State University, Marshall

Registration materials available on line: [www.lifetimeoflearning.com](http://www.lifetimeoflearning.com)

Early Bird Registration: \$10 per student if received by March 10, 2008.

After March 10, registration cost: \$20 per student. NO registrations accepted after March 14, 2008.



### Competitions Planned:

- Culinary (Cooking)
- Cake Decorating
- Menu Design
- Place Setting
- Garnishing
- Baking



### *Baking with Marjorie!*

An Event Open to the Public  
March 25, 2008

Tickets \$15.00 per person  
(advance purchase only)

Marshall Middle School

Dinner 6:00 pm

Baking Presentation 7:00 pm

Cookbook sales & signing

Proceeds go to help fund Culinary  
Skills Challenge student activities

**KEYNOTE PRESENTER FOR 2008:** Marjorie Johnson, the “Blue Ribbon Baker” has appeared on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* several times, *The View*, and various other national and local television appearances. Marjorie is from Robbinsdale, MN, and promises to entertain us as well as demonstrate and share some of her baking success secrets! Her presentation on March 26 will take place prior to the awards ceremony.

Interactive events will also be a part of the day, where students will participate in various hands-on activities demonstrated by food industry and hotel/restaurant professionals.

*The 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Minnesota Pro Start Student Invitational will once again be hosted at SMSU in conjunction with Culinary Skills Challenge.*

*\*In case of inclement weather, the event will be held on March 27, 2008.*

To see photos from past events, go to: [www.lifetimeoflearning.com](http://www.lifetimeoflearning.com)  
& click on the Culinary Skills Challenge logo.

Comments & Questions can be directed to:  
Mary Lou Blasing 507-537-2273

[Marylou.blasing@swsc.org](mailto:Marylou.blasing@swsc.org)



Support For Student Activities  
Comes Through The Student  
Enrichment Fund.



## JR. HIGH KNOWLEDGE BOWL TEAMS COMPETE



1st Place—Willmar



2nd Place  
Glencoe/Silver Lake #1



3rd Place  
Murray County Central #1

A total of 95 teams from 34 school districts competed in two Jr. High Knowledge Bowl Sub-Regional events on January 3 and 4 at SMSU in Marshall. After a written round and four oral rounds, the following teams were declared winners:

### January 3 – Region 8

- 1<sup>st</sup> – Windom #2
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – Luverne #1
- 3<sup>rd</sup> – Windom #3

### January 4 – Region 6

- 1<sup>st</sup> – Willmar
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – Hutchinson #1
- 3<sup>rd</sup> – New London-Spicer #1



The top 24 teams from each sub-regional advanced to compete at the regional event on January 10. With the top teams from each region playing against each other, the competition was intense. Teams were power ranked after each round so the top three teams competed against each other, the next three teams, etc. The winners of the regional event were:

- 1<sup>st</sup> – Willmar
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – Glencoe-Silver Lake #1
- 3<sup>rd</sup> – Murray County Central #1

Participation ribbons were given to all participants at the sub-regional level with trophies and ribbons awarded to the top three teams. Picture plaques and medals were award to the top three teams at the regional level. CONGRATULATIONS to all Jr. High Knowledge Bowl students and coaches!

# WELCOME NEW SW/WC SC MEMBERS!!

Samuel Lutheran School, Marshall

## SENIOR HIGH KNOWLEDGE BOWL

### Competitions Approaching for Sr. High Knowledge Bowl

Submitted by Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

Schools have registered teams to compete in the Sr. High Knowledge Bowl events coordinated by the SW/WC Service Cooperative. The final deadline was February 7.

The events are scheduled by region as listed below:

#### REGION 6

Sub-Regionals: February 29 & March 7

Regional: March 12

#### REGION 8

Sub-Regionals: March 7 & March 12

Regional: March 17



Competition at these events is intense as teams play for the chance to advance to the regional and ultimately, to the state competition. Three teams from Region 6 and four teams from Region 8 represent their region at the state event.

#### STATE COMPETITION

April 17-18 – NEW DATE

For more details about the events or Knowledge Bowl in general, check out our website: [www.swscedservices.org](http://www.swscedservices.org). Scroll over Student Activities on the left and then click on KB Coaches Info or Sr. High Knowledge Bowl for forms and information. If you have questions, contact Sue Gorecki at [sue.gorecki@swsc.org](mailto:sue.gorecki@swsc.org) or 507-537-2258.

## KNOWLEDGE BOWL: NOT-SO-NERDY JUNIOR HIGH TEAM TAKES FIRST AT TOURNAMENT

**WILLMAR** — The students on Willmar's winning junior high knowledge bowl team want people to know a few things about them. Chiefly, that they're not "as nerdy as everybody thinks we are," according to 15-year-old Aileen Clarke of Willmar. Yes, they're smart, and they do well at knowledge bowl, described by team member Troy Stulen as "Trivial Pursuit without the game board." They did so well this year that the six-member team from Willmar won first place among 96 teams at the regional knowledge bowl earlier this month in Marshall. They have other interests, too, like sports, music, science fiction and video games. And they all have a sense of humor. Asked what else the community should know about them, Drew Larson, 14, of Willmar, said, with a huge grin, "We're geniuses." His friend Samuel Benson chimed in, "We're humble, too," to laughter from the rest of the team as they sat around a table in the Willmar Senior High office.

Actually, a successful knowledge bowl team is more than a collection of smart kids, said coach Randy Frederickson. He's coached junior high knowledge bowl for 18 years. To compete in a knowledge bowl meet, students take a written test of 60 questions. After teams are ranked based on the written scores, they participate in four oral rounds with 45 questions in each. Team members tap a strip connected to a computer to "buzz" in with an answer. Smart kids with forceful personalities aren't always the best players, Frederickson said. They may think they are always right and persuade other players to go along with them. To do well, the team has to work together on the oral rounds, he said. "Everybody's got to feel they are equal." Frederickson has apparently done a good job of instilling that sense of equality on the team. Some members are more talkative, others are quiet. But they showed a mutual respect for each other as they put their heads together to solve the "Cryptoquip" and work on a crossword puzzle in a newspaper. The students joked about having "natural talent," but Aileen admitted, more seriously, that "we were really bad at the beginning."

It's hard to study for something like knowledge bowl, because the questions are about so many different subjects. In the rounds of 45 oral questions, 15 correct would be considered a good score and 20 would be great, the team said. They classified 30 out of 45 as "phenomenal."

Russ Nelson, 13, of Willmar had simple advice for people in knowledge bowl — “pay attention” to everything. Russ is the winning team’s only eighth-grader. The others are freshmen at Willmar Senior High, but are still considered members of the junior high team. Team members have specialties. Troy, 15, of Willmar can answer lots of the sports questions and thinks of watching “Sports Center” as a way to prepare for meets. Other strong subjects: science for Drew, math for Samuel, animals for Emily Streich, communication and geography for Aileen, and history for Russ Nelson. The specialties have grown from classes they like or from other interests. Emily said she has been interested in being a zoologist and watches the Animal Planet Network a lot. Russ has a book of “Amazing Facts of World War II.” Sometimes, a question will relate to something one of them learned in a class just the day before. One time, they played a handheld version of “Are you Smarter than a Fifth Grader?” during a break at a meet and encountered a question that they were asked in the next round. Coincidences like that happen “surprisingly often,” Drew said. “It shouldn’t happen, but it does.”

Frederickson said he is often impressed with the knowledge of his students. “You don’t have a good comprehension of how much they know until you start asking them questions,” he said. “It is a very witty group of people,” he added. There is some basic knowledge that is good for all team members to have, but Frederickson doesn’t have them memorize facts that much. “When they get together to practice, they don’t want to study,” he said. “They’ve been doing that all day.” The students prefer to launch right into practice questions. In fact, once a season is over, the kids often want to keep coming to practice and running through questions. Some of the students are involved in knowledge bowl because Frederickson recruited them. Others were persuaded by friends. The fun and the competition keep them coming back. “You meet people you wouldn’t otherwise,” said Emily, 15, of Kandiyohi. “It’s not like any sort of other competition I’ve ever done,” said Samuel, 14, of Willmar. It’s a lot of fun, the once-a-week practice schedule doesn’t require a big time commitment, “but you can do well,” he added. When Frederickson pushed them for a deeper answer, the team members said they enjoy competing, and they laughed as he encouraged them to admit that they really like winning. The coach smiled at that, but he said that it’s not only about winning. In regional competition, teams that barely make the cut to move on to the next level are still excited, because it means that they get to keep competing.

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## STUDENT ENRICHMENT – A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Last year, the SW/WC Service Cooperative served 22,980 K-12 students in programs, conferences, and competitions. Students studied, practiced, presented, created, read, wrote, cooked, baked, designed, demonstrated, and explored. They traveled from all parts of the region to Knowledge Bowls, Spelling Bee, Creative Writing, Young Artists, Young Writers, Science and Nature, Junior Achievement, Technical Skills Challenge, Culinary Skills Challenge, and more.

Is there a value to students when they participate in these activities? Is there a tangible benefit to the student? From a teacher’s perspective, is it worth all the hours they spend to help their students practice and prepare for a competition or get students excited enough to want to get on a bus early in the morning to attend an event? From a school administrator’s perspective, with the growing cost of transportation and other expenses to attend these activities, is it worth it? Is there a benefit to STUDENTS?

Here is one student’s story. Please read and decide...

*In 2005 when I was a sophomore, my Family and Consumer Science (FACS) teacher approached me suggesting that I enter the Cake Decorating Competition at this new event called Culinary Skills Challenge. I liked FACS class, but I wasn’t sure about actually COMPETING in something. Cake decorating? I don’t plan to be a baker! At this point, I’m not sure what I want to do, but I’m kind of leaning towards being a doctor. At first I thought NO WAY, but then the FACS teacher was really encouraging me, and some of my friends were going, so I thought it could be fun. My mom suggested I do a baseball “theme”. Here’s my CREATION...*





*I didn't win an award that first year, but I realized that many of the students were in the same boat as I was. When it was all done, I came to the conclusion that I really did have fun. I also learned that my cake wasn't the worst one there!*

*The next year I was a Junior, and sure enough, here came my FACS teacher again, promoting the Culinary Skills Challenge to us. I was feeling a little bit better about it this year and having one year of tough competition under my belt, I thought I'd try the Garnishing Competition. By this time, I was starting to like this food career stuff, and I'd managed to get a part time job at a local café. The café owner let me use their garnishing tools for the event.*



*Here I am, at the AWARDS! That's me on the far left...I won FIRST PLACE in the Garnishing Competition. We had this cool challenge called "brown bag surprise". We had one hour to take whatever food items were in the bag and create garnishes. Garnishing is more like ART than cooking!*

*When the 2006-07 school year rolled around, I was ready for SENIOR YEAR and graduation was in sight! My FACS teacher once again approached me, along with several of my classmates, asking if we wanted to be on the "Pro Start Culinary Team". Pro Start was a new course that our FACS program had started the previous year, teaching food, restaurant and hotel industry standards. There are a lot of opportunities to students who take these courses, and I was lucky to be in that class. So, here I am at the competition held at SMSU. The competition was intense, but we learned so much and met many professional chefs. (I'm the blur on the right):*



*Our Pro Start Culinary team took 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the STATE competition that was held the same day as Culinary Skills Challenge on March 29, 2007, at SMSU. What an experience! (Here I am, on the left standing by my favorite FACS teacher. Take a look at that serious medal hanging around my neck!)*

*I graduated in the spring of 2007. Here I am again. I returned during my break recently from the Culinary Institute of America in New York City to talk to the students at my former high school FACS class. Early on, I thought I wanted to be a doctor. Then after being encouraged by my FACS teacher, Lea Anne Bot to participate in all the culinary activities, that as well as working part time at the local café made me realize that I'd rather spend my life making people happy by creating great food, than perhaps having to tell them they have some serious disease. It's all about loving what you do, and I'm going to LOVE being a chef!*



**- Casey McCoy, Minneota High School**

Written by: Mary Lou Blasing, SW/WC Service Cooperative. For more information on the Annual Culinary Skills Challenge event, go to: [www.lifetimeoflearning.com](http://www.lifetimeoflearning.com) or email: [marylou.blasing@swsc.org](mailto:marylou.blasing@swsc.org)



## CYBER BULLYING

Cyber bullying is a new social networking phenomenon that is gaining attraction among teenagers, and it is drawing more attention from school districts and legislatures, who are anxious to find ways to deal with the online taunts and insults. Cyber bullying consists of using digital devices such as web-sites, on-line chat rooms, cell phones, e-mail, instant messaging, and social networking sites, to send or post negative messages, images, or video clips to intentionally cause emotional harm. It is a form of emotional bullying that causes feelings of fear, isolation, and humiliation among its targets. Research shows that cyber-bullying, like traditional bullying, can cause children to feel anxious, depressed, and to suffer from low self-esteem. They are also more likely to think about taking their own life. ([www.cyberbullyhelp.com](http://www.cyberbullyhelp.com)) Cyber bullying is on the rise because more kids than ever before are using electronic communications.



Ryan Halligan was taunted for months. Classmates spread rumors via instant messaging that the 13 year-old boy was gay. A female classmate pretended to like him and chatted with him online only to copy their personal exchanges and share them with her friends. Ghyslain Raza, a somewhat overweight adolescent, made a video of himself playing with a pretend light saber and left it lying around at school. One of his classmates found the video and posted it online as a joke. It's bad enough to be bullied by one kid and nobody else knows about it,

but a video seen by hundreds can be devastating (Chibbaro, J., Professional School Counseling). Students have also been known to use their cell phone to take images of their teachers and superimpose them on obscene images on the internet.

Cyber bullying doesn't end when the school bell rings; it can be 24/7, so there's no escape. The computer could simply be turned off, but that's not really an option for most of today's teens that rely on the internet for communicating with their peers. Anytime of the day or night, the cell phone can ring or there can be a text message saying, "We'll get you tomorrow." The lack of face to face contact can tempt bullies to new levels of cruelty.

Bill Belsey, a father and educator, who has studied and now runs web sites about cyber bullying, states: "When kids feel there aren't consequences for the communications, they take liberties." It's a new world for these kids. They are dealing with something no generation before them has had to contend with. ([www.bullying.org](http://www.bullying.org))

The growing number and severity of cyber bullying incidents are leading educators and authorities to start taking action. Awareness is one of the first steps in implementing prevention and intervention strategies.

## UPCOMING STUDENT EVENTS

*NOTE: SHKB = Senior High Knowledge Bowl*

**2/29/08—SHKB Region 6 Sub-Regional—Granite Falls**

**3/7/08—SHKB Region 6 Sub-Regional—Canby**

**3/11/08—Multi Region State Spelling Bee—St. Cloud**

**3/12/08—SHKB Region 8 Sub-Regional—Marshall**

**3/12/08—SHKB Region 6 Regional—Marshall**

**3/17/08—SHKB Region 8 Regional—Pipestone**

**3/25/08—Baking with Marjorie—Marshall**

**3/26/08—Culinary Skills Challenge—Marshall**

**4/14/08—4/18/08—Children's Author & Illustrator Residencies**

**4/17/08—4/18/08—SHKB State Competition—Brainerd**

**4/20/08—Creating Spaces Writing Contest Award Ceremony**

**4/28/08—5/2/08—Children's Author & Illustrator Residencies**

**4/30/08—SW Minnesota Technical Skills Challenge—Granite Falls**

**5/13/08—Conference for Young Writers—Marshall**

## RISK MANAGEMENT

### MEET DOUG DERAGISCH DIRECTOR OF RISK MANAGEMENT

We are excited to announce the addition of Doug Deragisch to our risk management staff! Mr. Deragisch assumed the duties of Director of Risk Management for the city, county, school, and other governmental agency health insurance pools on Monday, December 17, 2007.

Mr. Deragisch has extensive experience skills in leadership, administration, and management. Most recently, Doug worked as a financial advisor for Principal Financial Group. His strong leadership, administrative, and customer service skills will be a great asset as we continue to build internal capacity around providing quality risk management programs and services to the members.

We are also pleased to announce the re-assignment of Bobbie Carmody to serve as the administrative assistant to the risk management division. Bobbie's tenure with the SW/WC Service Cooperative, her outstanding ability to provide quality service, and her administrative support skills will assist the risk management division's efforts to provide high quality programs and services.



**Doug Deragisch**  
Director of Risk Management

You can reach Doug at [doug.deragisch@swsc.org](mailto:doug.deragisch@swsc.org) or at 507-537-2295. You can reach Bobbie Carmody at 507-537-2247 or [bobbie.carmody@swsc.org](mailto:bobbie.carmody@swsc.org).

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A GROUP HEALTH INSURANCE POOL??

**Strength and Security in Numbers.** Statewide, there are over 500 groups who partner with their service cooperative for health care coverage.

**Leveraged Purchasing Power.** Partnering with the SW/WC Service Cooperative protects your employees and your bottom line. Public employer groups of all sizes achieve purchasing power usually reserved for very large employers. This collective group participation maximizes your limited health benefit dollars.

**Great Stability Through Shared Risk.** Pooling results in more stable and predictable health care rates. With insurance pooling, your risk is spread among similar public employer groups participating in the plan. This reduces the need for sizable rate increases following a year of high claims, and promotes a willingness to pay a little more in years of low claims. Smaller yearly rate fluctuations contribute to greater stability, enhanced risk management, and long-term financial security for your organization.

**The Health Plans People Want.** The SW/WC Service Cooperative, along with the other Minnesota Service Cooperatives, have teamed with Blue Cross Blue Shield to offer the state's most comprehensive health care coverage. The array of benefit plans features innovative and flexible plan designs, competitive pricing, member health management and improvement programs, and dedicated customer service and support.

**Preserving Your Group's Autonomy.** When you join forces with other public employer groups in your area, you maintain your group's independence and local autonomy.

**Keeping Your Health Care Local.** BCBS has the state's largest provider network, in addition to dedicated customer service, operations, sales and account management teams.

**Good Health is Good Business.** There are many health plan support programs and services through BCBS.

**Lower Costs.** There are lower administrative fees, a 20-25% lower stop loss rate than the commercial market, lower target loss ratio for stop loss claims, and consumer directed plans such as VEBA and HSAs.

**Question:**

I was recently reading about health savings accounts (HSA) and wanted to know if they were available through the SW/ WC Service Cooperative Group Health Pool?

**Answer:**

Yes. HSA plans and (their related) savings accounts have become more attractive to consumers. The rules for HSA plans and savings accounts require a high deductible health plan compliant with IRS regulations. One requirement is that the minimum deductible is \$1,100 for single and \$2,200 for family coverage. We recommend including embedded family deductibles (this limits the per person deductible to the single amount) and fourth quarter carryover (this allows actual deductible expenses in October, November, and December to be carried over) to help meet the deductible in the following year. Two HSA advantages are (1) that each employee each year can individually determine how much to defer from salary or other sources of income (tax free) into their own health savings account to be used for paying the deductible or roll forward and (2) the HSA can also be used for a flex expenses (213d) or cashed out by paying a 10% penalty prior to age 65 and the deferred taxes. The HSA health plans provided by BCBS may include first dollar coverage (without deductible) for annual preventative care



Dan Weir

visits, cancer screenings including mammogram, Pap smear, PSA test and colonoscopy.

**Question:**

Someone mentioned that they were able to log onto the Blue Cross Blue Shield website and download their health care claims data and forms. Is this available to me?

**Answer:**

Yes. You can go online and download health care claims data and forms from the BCBS website at <http://www.bluecrossmn.com/mnservcoop/>. You will need to enter in a user name and designate a password. BCBS will send a pin number in 7 to 10 days which will allow you to have access to your health claims history for the past 2 years. In

## Benefits Corner



addition to this information there are options, such as, cool tools, health care calculators, and a free online health risk assessment. Currently, the online health risk assessment requires you to create a second user name and password (although BCBS has indicated a single log in for health care data and the online health risk assessment should be available by the end of March 2008).

Please send any questions you may have to Shelly Maes at [shelly.maes@swsc.org](mailto:shelly.maes@swsc.org). We will include them in the next issue of The Review.

## WELCOME NEW CCOGA GROUPS AS OF JANUARY 1, 2008

CITY OF VADNAIS HEIGHTS  
PACT 4 FAMILIES COLLABORATIVE, WILLMAR  
SOUTH METRO FIRE DEPARTMENT, WEST ST. PAUL  
COTTONWOOD COUNTY

## RISK MANAGEMENT STAFF

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## NEARLY 180 GATHER FOR THE 2008 TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

By: Josh Sumption, Manager of Information Technology

Thursday, February 7 was our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Technology Conference at the SW/WC Service Cooperative in Marshall and proved to be a day full of eye-opening and inspirational experiences for everyone in attendance. Our official registration counts show that 136 school district and other member agency employees attended the event in accompaniment of about 40 vendor, presenter and SW/WC Service Cooperative employee attendees. The Information Technology Department staff at the SW/WC SC has been more than pleased with the phenomenal reception to the conference as well as the praise and response received about the conference from our members.

The focus of this year's conference was our keynote speaker, Mike Detloff, a detective on the Moorhead, Minnesota Police Department. Detective Detloff presented information around the topics of online dangers for today's youth and adults alike and one of the hot topics in today's schools, cyber bullying. The audiences in each session experienced firsthand how cyber predators prey on youth on the Internet as Detective Detloff simulated a child in some common online meeting places. Also discussed was the danger of sharing information on popular social spaces like MySpace and Facebook. "Detloff's message was emotional and awakening," noted a conference participant responding to the keynote address.



Doug Johnson, Director of Media and Technology for Mankato Public Schools returned to the conference as a featured speaker for the second year. Mr. Johnson's sessions focused around the social technologies that are moving us beyond Web 2.0 and making the Internet a society. The practical application in the classroom and the need for adequate school policy when approaching these technologies was also discussed by Johnson.

Other topics covered at the conference included new software from Microsoft, Apple, Adobe and Symantec. Security practices and awareness was covered in a number of sessions supplementing the need to ensure the stability and dependability of a business class network. The student information system offerings through SW/WC Service Cooperative were also demoed and discussed throughout the day by SW/WC SC and TIES staff members. SMART Boards continued to be the hottest topic of the conference with nearly 30 participants attending each of the two SMART Board Sessions and the Senteo Classroom Response system session. New movements in Technology Integration from the incorporation of Moodle and Podcasting into a school environment to covering the latest in Distance Education at the High School and College levels available in the K-12 environment were presented throughout the day for all educators.

It can be anticipated that after looking at the interest and discussion held at this year's conference that we will continue to see further implementation of technologies such as SMART Boards, SMART Senteo Systems, and Moodle into our classrooms. Building upon those technologies, we will also see the interest in and the offerings through Internet2 become more and more prevalent in the area. With the overwhelming response to the keynote address we also hope to see a new level of awareness in our school districts. This is of the utmost of importance as we look at protecting the ones that we will be entrusting with the future: our K-12 Students. Regardless if you were a participant from a K-12 School district in Minnesota or South Dakota or an employee of one of our many City, County and Government Agencies in attendance, it is a combined responsibility among all of us to ensure that the student in our schools and our homes are safe from the dangers on the Internet and from the abuse that can occur through the many social hotspots that it hosts.

The conference proved to be a very energetic and exciting day for the SW/WC Service Cooperative IT Staff and we look forward to working towards building and expanding our success this year and providing this region an even better conference next year. If you have any suggestions or comments regarding the conference feel free to contact Josh Sumption (507) 537-2265

or [josh.sumption@swsc.org](mailto:josh.sumption@swsc.org)





## UPCOMING TECHNOLOGY TRAINING

Advanced Moodle Training	February 25—March 7 Online!
Podcasting (1/2 Day)	March 7
Social Networking (1/2 Day)	March 14
Regional Technology Directors/ Coordinators Workshop	March 18
Introduction to Technology Integration (1/2 Day)	March 21
Regional Technology Directors/ Coordinators Workshop	April 15



**Watch for additional sessions of our popular Moodle 101 Classes and SMART Master Training Sessions this Spring!**

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## ONLINE LEARNING COURSES 2008-2009

SW/WC Service Cooperative is pleased to announce the formation of a fully certified online learning community in our region called SW/WC Online Learning Community. This program is fully driven by the schools in our region and all courses are taught by fully licensed teachers in our schools. For the 2008-2009 school year there will be a total of 20 online courses offered from our schools. All courses are taught using the Moodle online course management system so students have the flexibility to take courses during any period that fits into their schedule. Courses cost \$350 per student/semester. Please take a look at the course catalog and consider including these courses in your registration process. This is an excellent way to provide students access to courses not currently available in your school or help students who struggle in the traditional classroom. If you would like more information and enrollment information please contact Courtney Bartelt at (507) 537-2259. To view the course catalog go to [www.swsc.org](http://www.swsc.org) and click on “programs and services”, “technology”, then “distance learning services”.

## PREPARE YOUR CLASSROOM FOR KIDS WITH AUTISM

CHARACTERISTIC	CLASSROOM ADAPTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need for sameness and difficulty with transitions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define classroom areas: Create individual work areas, free time areas, and open for discussion using bookcases, cabinets.</li> <li>Keep classroom consistently organized.</li> <li>Choose designated seat for student.</li> <li>Keep daily schedule in one place in classroom</li> <li>Develop a visual agenda to help the student understand the agenda in advance.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problematic or acting-out behavior. Comment: As you get to know your student, you should also be analyzing the function of the behavior. If escape is the function, then you would not want the child to “escape” without having accomplished something first or communicating appropriately the need for some self/down time. Preferable, a “break” area should be used prior to a blow up.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have a recreation area or playground nearby for student to let off steam.</li> <li>Identify a home base area to escape classroom stimulation for awhile.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easily distracted by sights and sounds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seat student in low traffic area of classroom</li> <li>Use carpeting.</li> <li>Face desks away from windows and doors.</li> <li>Designate a home base area to escape classroom stimulation for awhile.</li> <li>Teach child when he or she can and cannot use computer; some teachers cover the computer to indicate it’s not time to use it.</li> <li>Seat student away from toys and books.</li> <li>Help child learn how to handle distractions over time.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensitivity to touch. Comment: In some cases, younger children with Autism still like to be touched. The parents will be able to help you understand their child’s sensitivity in this regard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid touching student initially.</li> <li>Teach tolerance to touch.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensitivity to smells (wet shoes of classmate, hand lotion, musty locker, hamster cage, rubber cement).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid using perfumes or heavy lotions.</li> <li>Seat student near open door or open window in rooms with strong smells (art room).</li> <li>Ask custodians to order and use unscented cleaning supplies.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensitivity to sounds (air conditioner, shuffling of feet, scratching of pencils, certain tones of music).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Move student away from sounds.</li> <li>Use soft voice when possible.</li> <li>Have students use ear plugs or headphones (when appropriate).</li> <li>Install carpeting or carpet remnants</li> <li>Put material under desk legs.</li> <li>Prepare student for sounds (before bell rings, fire drills).</li> <li>Gradually teach tolerance to sounds</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensitivity to light, particularly fluorescent lights.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower levels of light.</li> <li>Turn off overhead lights.</li> <li>Try different colors of light.</li> <li>Have student use sunglasses or baseball cap</li> <li>Move student’s seat away from reflections on wall.</li> <li>Use bulbs that do no flicker.</li> </ul>

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## NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR 2008 OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR AWARD

The WEM Foundation and the Center for Academic Excellence (CAE) invite you to help recognize and honor the outstanding K-12 educators who help make Minnesota a national leader in teaching and learning.

CAE is accepting nominations for the tenth annual WEM Foundation Outstanding Educator Awards in three categories: Academic Challenge Coach of the Year (for outstanding coaches of activities endorsed by Minnesota's Academic League Council), Teacher Achievement (for teachers who excel in advancing student learning in challenging or alternative settings), and Ethics in Education (with individual and team recognitions for promotion of ethical behavior in school curriculum or policy and personal practice). Currently-practicing educators from public and non-public schools, including public charter schools, are eligible for nomination. Nominations are particularly encouraged from students, parents and colleagues.

The CAE and the WEM Foundation work in partnership with the service cooperative members of the Minnesota Service Cooperatives to administer this program on a statewide basis. (CAE is a non-profit organization that delivers statewide student and educator recognition programs.) A blue-ribbon judging panel will name six state honorees and regional finalists to help showcase academic excellence in Minnesota. Each state honoree will receive an unrestricted \$10,000 prize from the WEM Foundation, to honor the "unsung heroes" of the education profession.

Additional information about the awards criteria, including an online nomination link, is available at CAE's web site: <http://www.mncae.org>. Nomination forms also are available by calling CAE at 507-389-2461. Nominations received by March 3, 2008, will be eligible for consideration for the 2008 awards program.



## 24TH ANNUAL SPECIAL EDUCATION DAY OF EXCELLENCE



**Monday, March 10, 2008  
8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
Southwest Minnesota State University**

Welcome again to what is now our 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Day of Excellence where our focus is “Achieving Educational Excellence” and its impact on Special Education. Sessions will be conducted for Special Education Teachers, General Education Teachers, Administrators, Paraprofessionals, Parents, Agency Personnel and many others.  
CEU’s will be available.



*Tim Piccirillo  
Professional Speaker*

### **The Magic of Your Potential**

In this keynote presentation Tim will show participants that their jobs DO matter and to not give up on ANY child. Utilizing magic, humor and personal example, Tim will share his story of living with a debilitating disability and attaining success in three different fields despite it. Tim promises you will leave this session inspired, motivated and feeling just plain GREAT!

You can find full conference information at:  
[www.swsc.org](http://www.swsc.org) under Workshops/Seminars— “Day of Excellence Conference”

The Registration Deadline is February 20th—check online or contact Deecy Jesse for availability after the date. Ph.507-537-2253 or [deecy.jesse@swsc.org](mailto:deecy.jesse@swsc.org)

## **WELCOME TO OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS!!**

**Lynn Suter—Kerkhoven/Murdock/Sunburg—School Board Member  
Bonnie Barnhardt—Avera Marshall Regional Medical Center  
Jan Fransen—Jackson County**

**SW/WC SERVICE COOPERATIVE  
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