

“Hearing Dog” Hogan and Trainer Train Each Other

By Meredith Stanton Vaselaar, Nobels County Review Staff Writer-Reprinted with permission

He has become a familiar site around Adrian – curly hair, brown eyes, friendly. He has quickly warmed his way into the hearts of those who meet him. He is a favorite among the students at Adrian Elementary School and the Sanford Adrian Care Center. He is known, simply, as “Hogan.”

Hogan is an eighteen-month old Shih Tzu mix with a very important job – Hogan is a professional “hearing dog.” A hearing dog is just one of many types of service dogs available to adults with disabilities. Most have heard of “seeing eye dogs,” in which a dog helps guide someone that is visually impaired. Someone with a hearing impairment uses a hearing dog. On June 11, 2008, Hogan took up permanent residence with owner, Sherrilyn Klaassen of Adrian.



Sherrilyn Klaassen was diagnosed with a hearing impairment shortly after beginning school at the age of five. Klaassen’s mother suspected a problem when Sherrilyn mispronounced a word her teacher had used, “yard light.” Eventually, Klaassen was tested at the University of Minnesota, where the cause of her hearing was attributed to unexplained nerve damage, and the condition would progressively deteriorate. She was fitted for her first hearing aid at the age of fifteen.

Klaassen grew up in Ellsworth, MN, and is the middle child in a family of three, with both an older and a younger brother. She credits her family with helping her as she was growing up. “They always made sure I pronounced things correctly,” recalls Klaassen, “they weren’t going to let me get by just because of my impairment.” The diligence and support

of her family helped her over the years. After graduating from HS, Klaassen went on to graduate from Bemidji State University and landed her first librarian job shortly thereafter, in South Dakota. That same year, Klaassen ran across an article about hearing dogs. She decided to look into getting a hearing dog.

“My first hearing dog, Flash, was a poodle-mix,” says Klaassen, “Flash was my ‘ears;’ when I got him, he had already been



trained as a hearing dog.” Flash was with Klaassen for many years, until he died at the age of sixteen years in 1997.

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Executive Director Report

By Cliff Carmody, Executive Director

Shared Services – The Service Cooperative Model

The bipartisan proposal presented by Governor Pawlenty that schools cut costs by combining their purchasing power to obtain goods and services is not a new idea to our members.

Schools have been combining purchasing power and shared services through the SW/WC Service Cooperative for over thirty years. In fact, the SW/WC Service Cooperative was created by the legislature for exactly this purpose. Today, there are nine service cooperatives serving the state through a shared/cooperative services model. The Service Cooperative concept has worked so well, that in 1995, the legislature allowed us to extend membership to cities, counties, governmental agencies and non-profits.

Since our inception, the SW/WC Service Cooperative has bid and negotiated purchasing contracts, from food to vehicles, with significant savings to all members. We have been a leader in providing affordable educational professional development. We have created a voluntary health insurance pool that has saved our members thousands of dollars and is one of our most successful shared services programs – all the while being voluntary! We have provided access to special needs and curriculum consultants for our school districts that would otherwise not be able to provide these services on their own.

All of these “shared services” are provided without a direct appropriation from the legislature. In addition, we do not have taxing authority and there is no mandated participation in programs and services. Member choice, efficient operations, and quality collaboration make SW/WC Service Cooperative a valuable partner for local government entities like schools, cities, and counties.

The cooperative purchasing program the SW/WC Service Cooperative provides has grown to be a statewide program with national ties; covering all Minnesota schools under the Cooperative Purchasing Connection banner. In addition, this program taps into a 23 state school bidding organization known as the Association of Educational Purchasing Agencies. As an example, in fiscal year 2008, the statewide Service Cooperatives’ purchasing program saved school members hundreds of thousands of dollars

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Cliff Carmody

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Student Activities *(Continued from page 22)*

In addition to the keynote presentation, students in grades 3-8 will select hands-on topics from a wide range of classes related to writing, journaling, publishing, illustrating, cartooning, etc. Through interaction with presenters, students discover their creative abilities and how to express their thoughts.

After you receive the conference brochure and are ready to register, please check our website for a registration form that can be completed and emailed as an attachment. Using this form helps staff tremendously as it is much easier to read typed names than to decipher some handwriting! Directions to website: www.swsc.org, then click on Programs and Services across the top, then click on Student Activities in the alphabetical directory. All of our programs are now listed in the left hand column, click on Conference for Young Writers to take you to that page and scroll down for the registration form.



Presenters Assigned to Schools Participating in the Children's Author & Illustrator Program

Elementary schools have the opportunity to participate in the Children's Author & Illustrator Program by registering for either a half-day or full-day residency. This year's residencies are scheduled during the time period of April 14 – 17 and April 27 – May 1. Participating schools were notified of the date and the presenter assigned to their school in mid-January. Book orders for the libraries have been processed and student orders are due March 6. The presenters and their schools are listed below.



Terri De Gezelle, Author

Schools: Benson-Northside; Canby; Lac qui Parle Valley-Madison-Marietta-Nassau; Madison Public Library (evening); Marshall-Holy Redeemer, Middle School, Park Side, and West Side; Milroy; Minneota; Tracy; Wabasso Public Library (hosting Public School and St. Anne's).

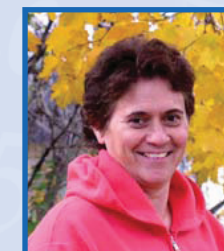
Jim Postier, Illustrator

Schools: Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa; Glencoe-Silver Lake – Lakeside; Hutchinson – Park and West; Paynesville.

Laura Purdie Salas, Author/Poet

Schools: Balaton; Cedar Mountain; Edgerton; Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg; Lincoln HI; MACCRAY-East and West; Redwood; Round Lake/Brewster; Russell-Tyler-Ruthon; Yellow Medicine East-Bert Raney.

If you have any questions about any of the Student Activities please contact Sue Gorecki at sue.gorecki@swsc.org or 507-537-2258 or Andrea Anderson at andrea.anderson@swsc.org or 507-537-2257.



Terri De Gezelle



Jim Postier



Laura Purdie Salas

Student Activities *(Continued from page 21)*

Record numbers attend Science & Nature Conference

Many students were on the road around 6:30 a.m., coming from Belgrade-Brooklyn-Elrosa, Eden Valley-Watkins, Paynesville, and Jackson County Central to SW/WC Service Cooperative's 15th

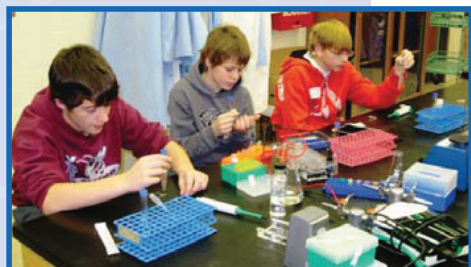


Annual Science & Nature Conference on January 6 in Marshall. This was the largest student conference ever with over 1300 participants – kindergarten through eighth grade students, parents and teachers from thirty-three school districts. Schools with more than 40 participants included Jackson County Central, Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg, Marshall, Murray County Central, New London-Spicer, Paynesville, and Willmar. We appreciate the assistance our local schools provide by getting the information to parents and, in many cases, handling registration and transportation.



Students enjoyed their participation in the hands-on classes as evidenced by a sample of evaluation comments listed below. When asked what they liked best, students responded:

- I liked that in the Brains, Sprains, Bones and More class we could see real body parts.
- The experiments about dry ice.
- The Grossology class.
- That we got to use robots – it was a great learning experience.
- I got to see my own DNA.
- I just liked learning about everything – I can't wait to go back.



The SW/WC Service Cooperative expresses their appreciation to the following sponsors for their support. Conference sponsors included Alter Metal Recycling, Southwest Minnesota State University and the Minnesota NASA Space Grant Consortium. Keynote sponsor was the Southwest Initiative Foundation.

Plan to attend the Conference for Young Writers

Watch for brochures – arriving in schools in early March – for the 17th Annual Conference for Young Writers! Mark your calendar with the registration dates and plan to register early to save money. The Early Bird Registration Deadline is April 7 and the Final Registration Deadline is April 14. No registrations are accepted after the final deadline.

We're thrilled to have Mary Casanova, award-winning children's author of novels and picture books, as the keynote speaker. Her book awards include:

American Library Association "Notable," Aesop Accolades by the American Folklore Society, Parents' Choice "Gold" Award, Booklist Editor Choice, and two Minnesota Book Awards. The greatest reward for me," Casanova states, "is when a young reader tells me she or he loves one of my books. For me, it's all about communicating writer-to-reader through a character and story."



Health Insurance Renewal Planning

By Doug Deragisch, Director of Risk Management

The Annual Membership Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 23, 2009, at the Marshall Golf Club (10:00AM) and here is a list of items that should be reviewed in order to properly plan for the benefits offered your employees and your renewal.

1. **Plan Design:** This is the single most important factor that drives your health insurance costs. Making plan design changes will provide the greatest impact of lowering premiums.
2. **Choice of Plan Designs:** If you provide multiple plans, the choice and type of plans you provide and their relative value will be your second most significant cost driver.
3. **Your Contribution:** It is critical that your plan enrollees represent an adequate cross section of the risk profile of your group. This means you need to provide plans which you can afford to pay most of the premium cost (we recommend up to 70% of family contribution and 90% of single premium). Low contributions will lead to low participation which will very quickly lead your plan costs up at an abnormally high rate due to adverse risk selection.
4. **High Claims Cost Management:** Making sure you are limiting your exposure to high claim costs and funding the appropriate amount of reinsurance protection is an important driver of your health insurance premium. Currently, our insurance pool purchases Stop-Loss insurance at \$300,000 (reinsurance) and all individual claims for the group are 'pooled' between \$75,000 to \$300,000. This allows for the 'softening' of claim experience when a catastrophic event occurs.
5. **Administrative and Other Fixed Cost Charges:** Claims is the main component that drives the formula determining your premium rates. However, the ratio of claim costs to administrative and other fixed costs impacts your rate increases. The lower your administrative and other fixed costs, the greater percentage of your premium dollar is available to fund claims, which lowers your renewal. Last year, the average administrative and other fixed costs were 5.5%.

The SW/WC Service Cooperative understands the financial constraints that are on all of you during these difficult economic times. We believe that we leverage our pool strength and economies of scale to provide your group with the most competitive structure for your health insurance benefit program. We also satisfy your legal obligation to bid your program every five years as dictated by MN state statutes.

Feel free to contact me at 507-537-2295 or doug.deragisch@swsc.org if you have any questions.

Welcome...

The SW/WC Service Cooperative would like to welcome the following:

New School Member:

**St. Raphael School,
Springfield**

New Risk Management
CCOGA Pool Member:

**Lake Minnetonka
Conservation District**

Hogan the “Hearing Dog” *(Continued from page 1)*

It was hard losing Flash and for a time, Klaassen managed without a canine companion.



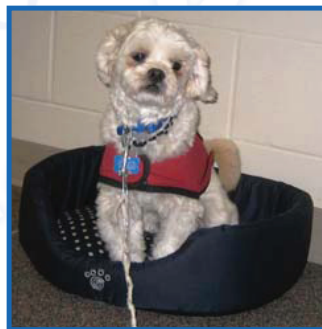
Ten years passed when, in 2007, Sherrilyn Klaassen decided it would be beneficial to have another hearing dog. The process to receive a hearing dog involves a lot of paperwork, interviews, and home visits. Klaassen was interviewed in November of 2007. In April of 2008 she learned that she would be receiving a hearing dog. On June 11, 2008, Hogan arrived.

“It is different this time,” explains Klaassen, “when Flash

came to live with me, he was already trained. When Hogan arrived, he was not trained. We trained each other, which created a very strong bond between us.” Klaassen and Hogan were given very specific tasks that they had to learn. The first task was for Klaassen to teach Hogan how to heel. “It was very important that Hogan learned to listen to me, and to heel. A hearing dog must be able to behave in public, so ‘heel’ was a very important first lesson.” The first assigned tasks for Hogan were to learn to alert Sherrilyn when there was someone at the door or when the alarm on the clock sounded. The second set of tasks included responding to a telephone call or an intruder in the house. The final task Hogan learned was to alert Klaassen when the smoke alarm sounded.

Training began immediately. By September, Hogan was ready to be tested. A representative from “Hearing and Service Dogs of Minnesota” came to Adrian on September 15, 2008, and videotaped Hogan as he went through the exam. Hogan responded and alerted Sherrilyn to door knocks, alarms, telephone ringing, etc. Hogan passed with flying colors, becoming officially certified as a hearing dog. Hogan officially graduated in November; he now wears a new cape that announce to one and all that he is certified.

Life is busy for Hogan. He attends school with Sherrilyn, who is the Librarian at the Adrian Elementary School. On the first day of school, Ms. Klaassen intro-



duced Hogan to the students, as well as sent a note home for parents. The students were interested and excited about having a dog at school, while learning the importance of Hogan’s job. He has his own bed at school where he passes the day. He is on a leash that gives him a little roaming room behind the desk.

For Klaassen, it took a little getting used to having another hearing dog, after a break of eleven years. “I had to get used to the idea of having someone for whom I was responsible, and had to feed and take care of,” says Klaassen. Although not a problem, per se, it did not take long for Klaassen to discover Hogan’s weakness. “I always had a candy dish filled with Caramel Nips upon my end table,” she laughs, remembering, “it turns out that Hogan LOVES Caramel Nips and would help himself to the sweets, so I now have to remember to keep the candy dish covered.”

Hogan is an affectionate dog, loving to snuggle and be petted. He is a hit at the Nursing Home, where Klaassen works part-time. “Now, when I deliver snacks in the evening, the residents ask for Hogan, rather than me!” At home Hogan is on-task and brings a sense of security to Klaassen. “Hogan spends the nights in my bedroom, which has a child’s security gate so he cannot roam, if someone comes to the door, or the fire alarm goes off, or there is a storm, he will wake me up.” Hogan’s presence has made another change, “I can no longer sleep late!” says Klaassen, regretfully, “if I try to catch ‘just one more minute’ of sleep, there’s Hogan, pulling on my headband or licking my ear until I get up.”

When asked how things have changed from when Klaassen had Flash, in the 1980s and 1990s, to how it is now, eleven years later with Hogan, Klaassen notes that a hearing dog is much more accepted now than a decade ago. Despite Hogan’s cape, which identifies him as a service dog, and the copy of his certification, which Klaassen carries with her, which explains that Hogan is allowed in all places open to the general public, they are still often turned away in stores. This can be quite frustrating. The Adrian and Ellsworth communities have embraced Hogan. For both Hogan and Klaassen, their pairing has been a perfect match. Hogan provides assistance and security for Klaassen, while she lavishes love and attention on Hogan. And, once in a while, maybe a Caramel Nip or two!

Student Activities *(Continued from page 20)*

Junior High Knowledge Bowl

Two Jr. High Sub-Regional events were held simultaneously at SMSU on December 19 with 73 teams from 31 districts. Weather conditions prevented twelve additional teams (four districts) from participating. After a written round and four oral rounds of questions on a wide variety of topics, the following teams were declared winners:

Region 6

- 1st – Lac qui Parle Valley #3
- 2nd – Glencoe-Silver Lake #1
- 3rd – Montevideo

Region 8

- 1st – Springfield #1
- 2nd – Murray County Central #1
- 3rd – Springfield #2

The teams placing in the top half of each Sub-Regional event were invited back to compete against each other at a Regional event on January 8 in Marshall. After intense competition, the following teams were victorious. Congratulations to the winners:

- 1st – Murray County Central #1
- 2nd – Canby #1
- 3rd – Springfield #1



*Regional First Place,
Murray County Central #1*



*Regional Second Place,
Canby #1*



*Regional Third Place,
Springfield #1*

Mark Your Calendar: Important Dates for Student Activities

March

- 6 Sr. High Knowledge Bowl Region 6 Sub-Regional Event, Granite Falls
- 10 Sr. High Knowledge Bowl Region 8 Sub-Regional Event, Pipestone
- 12 Multi-Region State Spelling Bee, Fergus Falls
- 16 Sr. High Knowledge Bowl Region 8 Sub-Regional Event, Marshall
- 18 Sr. High Knowledge Bowl Region 6 Regional Event, Marshall
- 18 Sr. High Knowledge Bowl Region 8 Regional Event, Marshall
- 20 Entries due for Water is Life Art Contest

April

- 1 Water is Life Art Contest Regional Competition
- 7 Early Birg Registration Deadline-Young Writers
- 14 Final Registration Deadline-Young Writers Conf.
- 14-17 Children’s Author & Illustrator Residency Prog.
- 22-23 Sr. High Knowledge Bowl State Event, Cragun’s
- 26 Creating Spaces Awards Ceremony
- 27-May 1 Children’s Author & Illustrator Residency Prog.

May

- 6 Water is Life Art Contest State Exhibit/Awards Cer.
- 12 Conference for Young Writers
- 26-27 National Spelling Bee, Washington, D. C.

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9th Grade Academy *(Continued from page 18)*

State University. During this experience, students were exposed to a variety of information. Mr. John Morman, Director of Cultural Diversity, facilitated a game simulation to illustrate and discuss some of the differences that are relevant to the students in our schools today. Students were then given a tour of the university, were able to ask questions and hear from a panel of current SMSU students, and finished with a presentation from Mr. David Vikander, Director of Financial Aid. A big thank you goes out to United Way for helping fund this event, and upcoming opportunities, through a \$1,500 grant that was awarded to the Academy.

Another essential part of the Academy program is the use of data to guide programming and measure effectiveness. Being in the inaugural year, it is still early to validate many of the questions surrounding the Academy's effectiveness as there is not much to compare to in the past. We can, however, share a couple of items that seem



to say it is making a positive difference. A student survey was given during quarter 1 with the following results: 90% of the students said they were doing their best. 81% of the students said they felt successful. 88% of the students felt welcomed in the Academy. 85% of the students said they were treated with respect in the Academy. The NWEA math and reading tests are given three times per year in the Academy. In math, Academy students increased the group mean score by 2.64 RIT points from the Fall to Winter test which exceeded the target mean

growth for these same students by 1.20 points. In reading, Academy students increased the group mean score by 2.50 RIT points from the Fall to Winter test which exceeded the target mean growth for these same students by 1.28 points.

For more information or questions please email Brian Leibfried, Mathematics Teacher at brian.leibfried@marshall.k12.mn.us.

Student Activities

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

New This Year-Art Contest for High School Students

Entries for the 2009 Art Contest - Water is Life - must be received at the SW/WC Service Cooperative's Office by March 20, 2009. The contest is open to 9th-12th grade students in the participating Service Cooperatives. Acceptable media include photography, sculpture, fountains, painting, drawing and short video. This is the fifth year that the Freshwater Society is sponsoring the contest but the first year that we are involved. For detailed contest guidelines, refer to the Freshwater Society's website: www.freshwater.org.

The regional competition will be held in Marshall on April 1st with four semi-finalists advancing to the final competition. The 28 semi-finalists, their families and instructors will be invited to an art exhibit, reception and scholarship award ceremony on May 6 in the Lake Minnetonka area. The Freshwater Society is providing six \$500 scholarships to students who find an artistic and creative way to express the theme - Water is Life. All remaining finalists will be

awarded a certificate of participation and a monetary gift. An award will also be presented to the instructor/school representing the six scholarship winners.

Senior High Knowledge Bowl

Registrations are presently being received for participation in SW/WC Service Cooperative's Sr. High Knowledge Bowl program. Knowledge Bowl targets the following items desired by Fortune 500 companies: teamwork, problem solving, interpersonal, oral communication and listening skills. Local districts invite area schools to participate in invitations or practice meets in preparation for events coordinated by the Student Activities Program. Upcoming events are listed on page 21.



Student Activities continues on page 21

Executive Director Report *(Continued from page 2)*

on a sales volume that exceeded \$17 million.

Best of all, the members have continuous input and oversight of our service cooperative through a Board of Directors and advisory committee governance structure. This provides governance oversight along with built-in flexibility and response to member needs. The SW/WC Service Cooperative operates on a voluntary basis; if we don't perform well, our members would not continue to access their programs and services. The SW/WC Service Cooperative, along with our members, have flourished under this shared services model.

The infrastructure for shared services is in place and performing well. The SW/WC Service Cooperative is anxious to work with the Governor and the bipartisan committee to strengthen these programs and others in our region and state.

Not So Different: Snapshot of the BLC Day Treatment Program

By Susan Terhaar, Belview Learning Center Site Coordinator

The staff members at the Belview Learning Center (BLC) hear this comment from parents several times over the course of the school year. Parents are hesitant to take their child out of the "regular" school setting to attend a "different" school. Following are some of the points we share with parents to help alleviate their concerns:

How is BLC Similar to a "Regular" School?

Physical Similarities: The Belview Learning Center is located in the former Belview school building. Basically, we look like any other small town school. We have classrooms with large windows, a cafeteria, and a gymnasium. We benefit from having a large amount of space with fewer people occupying that space. This space allows us to have a large separation for our elementary students from our middle/high school students. When a student is struggling either behaviorally or academically, we have ample space for that student to take a break in a safe, controlled environment. Some day treatment programs are located in more of an office-type setting; we are fortunate to have a school building with all of the "normal" school amenities.

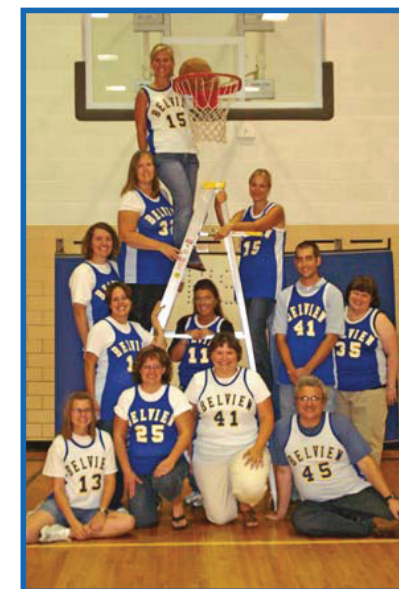
Schedule Similarities: Our school day runs from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Our students receive education in the five core subject areas: English, math, science, reading, and social studies. Students take classes with their peers and receive curriculum tailored to their abilities. One-on-one assistance is available from our special education teachers and paraprofessionals.

How is BLC Different from a "Regular" School?

Mental Health Services: In addition to receiving instruction in the core subject areas, students at BLC have time scheduled during the school day for group therapy, social skills, and interactive team building activities. Group therapy allows the student to process their feelings and behaviors on a daily basis. The social skills class focuses on areas such as self esteem, respect, relationships, and healthy living. Finally, students participate in interactive team building activities to improve on areas such as teamwork and sportsmanship.

Specialized Staff: The Belview Learning Center currently has three special education instructors, four special education paraprofessionals, a Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist, and four mental health practitioners. Our student to staff ratio is very low. Our staff receives training in CPI (Crisis Prevention Institute), physical intervention training and techniques, and additional specialized training such as Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) training. The education staff and mental health professionals work side-by-side to assist each student to reach their goals.

Ultimately, it is the characteristics that make our day treatment program "different" that help a student make real progress on their educational, mental health, and behavioral goals. If parents continue to have reservations regarding our "different" school, we encourage them to visit the Belview Learning Center to tour the facility and talk with our staff members. Most parents walk away with the knowledge that a "different" school isn't so bad.



Universal Design of Learning

By Mary Palmer, Director of Special Education, Willmar Service Center

The reauthorization of IDEA in 1997 required that all students, regardless of their abilities, must be given the opportunity to become involved with and progress in the general education curriculum. Essentially, this means that every student must have access to what is being taught. However, to provide access requires more than giving each student a textbook or computer. Rather, it means teachers must ensure that students are actively engaged in learning; with material and content that is challenging them, regardless of their developmental level.

In the past, common methods of attempting to include all students in content areas involved adapting or altering textbooks or tests to accommodate students' individual needs. A better way to provide student access is to consider the range of user abilities at the design stage of the curriculum and incorporate accommodations at that point. Allowing access for a wide range of users that is built into the curriculum is the premise of Universal Design for Learning or UDL.

In terms of curriculum, universal design incorporates instructional materials and activities that allow learning goals to be attainable by individuals with wide differences in their abilities to see, hear, speak, move, read, write, understand English, to attend, organize, engage, and remember. This type of curriculum process allows for flexibility which gives teachers the ability to provide each student access to the subject area without having to adapt the curriculum repeatedly to meet special needs.

The Center for Applied Special Technology or CAST states that the goal of education in the 21st century is not simply the mastery of knowledge but instead the mastery of learning. Education must produce students who know how to learn, want to learn, and are well prepared to learn. Past education practice has at times consisted of an inflexible, one size fits all approach that creates curriculum opportuni-

ties that do not allow for all students to engage actively in the general education curriculum content.

There is now more diversity within our public school systems than anytime in history. Universal Design for Learning is a process in which a teacher's goal is still for students to learn skills and understand the subject. However, in the past, traditional curriculum materials tend to offer only limited flexibility for meeting that goal. Students are frequently required to adapt to the curriculum. Universally designed curriculum overcomes limitations by incorporating three principles of flexibility into the design. This allows for a more efficient way to provide student access in that the range of user abilities is considered at the design stage of the curriculum and incorporates accommodations at that point. This "built-in" access for a wide range of users, those with and without disabilities, is the underlying principle in universal design.

CAST states that there are three primary principles to guide districts in implementing curriculum opportunities that embrace a Universal Design for Learning Approach. The first principle involves providing multiple means of representation. This is the "what" of learning. For example, a student with a language or cultural difference may require a different way of grasping information than other students. A variety of ways to represent material or ideas is needed to ensure all students learn. The second principle involves providing multiple means of expression. This is the "how" of learning. Principle three involves providing multiple means of engagement. This is the "why" of learning. For example, some students receive a learning environment that is very spontaneous while others prefer a very strict routine. CAST states that when these UDL principles of learning are supported, students gain knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm for learning; and their learning is validly assessed as curriculum and instruction become accessible and engaging for all learners.

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Caffeine Cravers

By Tony Miller, Redwood Area School, Special Education and Social Studies Teacher

Since the beginning of the school year, teachers at Redwood Area Schools have had an extra boost to get their morning off to a great start, thanks to Mr. Tony Miller's Entrepreneurship Class. The class is made up of 10-12 high school special education students with different disabilities. Criteria for entering the class is that the student needs to work on goals or has a deficiency in social skills, self control, work experience, or self advocacy.

This class is not your typical classroom learning—it has a real world aspect. In this class, the students started a coffee business known as Caffeine Cravers.

The business is really a front for the real purpose of teaching social skills, self control and work experience. Students are learning in a different atmosphere, and experiencing real hands-on learning. In the real world, an EBD meltdown could mean loss of job. Here they are able to work through issues. And, since this is the first set of students to experience this class, they are really setting the foundation for future students. As the semester changes, new students inherit the business name and some processes, but in the end, they will be the new management.

The students created the name and designed the logos, along with a lot of other aspects of the business. Teachers Tony Miller and Cindy Wittwer instruct the students—but only to a limit. They allow the students to make decisions even if they



are not the best ones. The students really have to listen to each other and their customers to get the results they are looking for. "The students have made mistakes," says Mr. Miller. Ms. Wittwer says, "This atmosphere is great for students who have a hard time sitting still."

The class grossed \$1,900 in 18 weeks, with the first four of those weeks comprised of getting things off the ground (meaning, no coffee was sold those four weeks). All of the

equipment is commercial grade BUNN. They have two airpot brewers and twelve 3.0 L airpots along with other supplies. The group uses about 10 pounds of Jumpy Monkey coffee per week. They buy Jumpy Monkey coffee from Service Enterprises Inc. in Redwood Falls, an organization that employs adults with disabilities. The coffee is of superior quality, and the students have over 25 flavors

to choose from. Customers can feel good about spending \$1 for a 16 oz premium cup of coffee when adults with disabilities roast and package it....and students with disabilities brew and market it.

Students have really enjoyed this opportunity. The duties range from creating flyers and developing marketing plans, to cleaning and brewing the coffee. All duties have been shared by students. They get to choose the flavors for the day, which have gotten high reviews from teachers and staff. They have even catered during parent/teacher conferences to show what they have been learning. The class also created a mug club where teachers bought specially made mugs and were part of various promotions. One student said she enjoys interacting with the customers, but realizes it does take a lot of planning and hard work to get a business up and running. "It helps if you're open minded," says the student. Another student has become interested in the opportunities this class has taught her. She is thinking about continuing entrepreneurship after high school. While the staff at school fill up their cups of coffee in the morning, they are pleased to know they are helping students expand their skills.

It is important to note that this is not a fundraiser! Fundraisers are more or less gifts! This is a real business, providing a REAL service, making real profit! They are hoping to expand to flavored lattes and mochas and also smoothies! Mr. Miller said, "I have enjoyed every minute of it!"



Junior Achievement and Economics

By Ruth Bot, Minneota High School, Business/Computers/Media Instructor

The first semester of the 2008-2009 school year is nearly complete. With that comes the end of Economics for half of the seniors. It is a state mandate that all seniors graduating from a public Minnesota school participate in a semester Economics class. In Minneota part of that course consists of working with Junior Achievement.

We have a local businessman come in and give the kids a real life look at the business world. Steve DeSutter generously donates his time to coming to the classroom and shares his knowledge of business, sales, marketing, and profit sharing. To understand the process of a profit-making business the students come up with something they want to market. For the past 12 - 15 years in Minneota the kids sell Minneota Viking Apparel. The students decide what exactly they want to sell, design a logo, sell the product, package the product, and deliver the goods to their customers. This year the class sold sweatpants, hooded sweatshirts, crew neck sweatshirts, and t-shirts as well as fleece jackets.

The class was divided into five teams of three. Before they started it was decided each team's goal was to sell \$2,500 worth of merchandise. Two of the five teams met that goal. The class decided to give \$500 to their class (for their class trip in May) and \$500 to the local Dollars for Scholars scholarship fund. The remaining profit will be divided between the members of the class.

Marshall Public Schools 9th Grade Academy

By Brian Leibfried, Marshall Public School, 9th Grade Academy Math Teacher

Research has shown time and again how valuable and crucial the 9th grade year is for the future success of students. Marshall High School is excited about the new addition of a 9th Grade Academy in the 2008-09 school year. The mission statement of the 9th Grade Academy is to create an environment that encourages involvement, growth, and rigor to help students transition to the high school and achieve success.

Currently, 62 students are enrolled in the Academy. Students spend the first two blocks of the day in their year-round Academy classes which include mathematics, language arts, science, and seminar. Each block is split into two skinny periods that run 50 minutes long for the core classes and 35 minutes for seminar. The remaining two blocks are spent in the regular MHS schedule.

Some of the features of the Academy set-up that are

Much discussion takes place when making these 'business' decisions. It's interesting to listen to these discussions and find out what each member of the class believes is important when dividing the profit. Just as in the real world, many times they needed to be reminded that there must BE a profit before they could spend it!

After three weeks of selling in October and packaging & delivering goods in December, the class is happy to say their hard work paid off and they learned important business lessons along the way. The top salesperson was Cynthia Calderon with Joe Kack and Maria Buysse taking second and third place. The teams that met their goals were: Maria Buysse, Jackie Buysse, & Meagan Tolk (sold \$3,377) and Cynthia Calderon, Joe Kack, & Kelsey Regnier (sold \$3,347). The class sold a total of almost \$13,000 worth of Viking Apparel. Thank you to all who supported the senior Econ class in this venture.



unique include the following:

- The Academy classrooms are set-up in close proximity to each other and student lockers.
- The Academy teachers have common planning time daily.
- The Academy has two adults in every classroom (Teacher & Special Ed. Para/ Team teaching math with Special Ed. Teacher).
- Academy Awards celebrations once a month to highlight where we've been and where we're going.
- The Academy has a flexible schedule which can be redesigned daily if needed.

An essential part of the Academy program is to offer exposure to postsecondary opportunities. On December 4th, we had the opportunity to visit Southwest Minnesota

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Educational Resource Library

By Mary Weber, Educational Resource Library Coordinator

This is the winter installment of information from the Educational Resource Library in Montevideo. It has been an interesting adventure this year—blizzards, late starts, no school, etc. This unfortunately affects our delivery of curriculum items to you. I apologize for the inconvenience weather causes in accessing our materials. Do not hesitate to contact our office. We will work with you to extend the materials, if possible or reschedule for an alternate date. I'm hoping the rest of our winter breezes by with few to no hitches and we can welcome spring with great enthusiasm.

Below are descriptions of a few new materials recently put into the library.

Practical Ideas That Really Work for Students with Reading Disabilities, Second Edition provides an assessment system and set of intervention ideas for students with mild or moderate reading disabilities or struggling readers in the content areas. They are intended for use with students in Grades 3-9. It includes a CD with black-line masters of the 37 ideas in the areas of vocabulary development, reading comprehension, and metacognitive skills.

Practical Ideas that Really Work for Teaching Math Problem Solving is intended for use with students who are using problem-solving skills that encompass addi-



tion and subtraction through pre-algebra or algebra skills. A majority of the ideas are applicable for students who are working on Grades 3 through 8 mathematics skills. The core of the book consists of 34 ideas that can be effective in assisting students experiencing difficulties in math problem solving. There is also a resource for ideas bibliography.

Helping At-Risk Students, Second Edition: A Group Counseling Approach for Grades 6-9 attempts to provide tools and techniques for practitioners working with youth at risk for academic, behavioral, and emotional difficulties. The curriculum is called SPARK. It

has eight modules addressing issues such as: Trust-Building and Communication; Anger Management and Emotion Regulation; Ethnic Identity and Anti-Prejudice; Educational Aspirations; Peer Pressure, Bullying, and Gangs; Male-Female Relationships; Exposure to Violence and Posttraumatic Stress Reactions; and Family Relationships.

Getting Ahead: Primary Science A set of 4 DVDs in the areas of Animal Babies; The Seasons & Cycles of Life; Life & Earth Sciences; and Physical Science. This set is for students in Grades K-3 (ages 5-9).

Getting Ahead: Intermediate Science A set of 4 DVDs in the areas of the Human Body; Life Science; Earth Science; and Physical Science. This set is for students in Grades 4-8 (ages 9-14).

Pipestone Area Schools Start Yellow Ribbon Program

By Tricia Warner, School Social Worker

Pipestone Area Schools restarted the Yellow Ribbon Program for suicide prevention. The committee designated January as Yellow Ribbon Month at our school, and let students know that help is available for those also dealing with issues such as depression, self-injury, bullying or substance abuse. We hoped to boost morale for students and staff after having a long Christmas break. Weekly drawings were held to promote the program. Staff and student winners received a free school lunch, malt, cookie or Casey's pizza and donut coupons.



Building Lego Battle Bots

By McLeod West's Multimedia Class

In December McLeod West students in grades 1-8 got to build their own Battle Bots. They built them using an instruction manual and their creative minds. They could pick any of the Lego bots in the manual, and make modifications, or create their own. It was a fun learning experience. When their bots were finished they would pick any group of their friends and find a special spot to battle them.



Heartland Ranch School

By Michele Reese, Heartland Ranch School Program Assistant

Reading

Recently, Reading was added as an additional class at the Heartland Ranch School. By adding another literature class to the class options, it gives the students who are behind in core classes a chance to catch up. Our library is small, consisting of 200 or less books. Recently teacher, Terri Collins, "shot for the moon" by applying for a \$50,000 grant to get some more books for the girls to read. As it turned out, the man judging the grant applications is also the chairperson for a literacy foundation. He passed the request on to his foundation and asked permission to start a book drive for our class. We may not have gotten the \$50,000 grant, but we have received five boxes of books so far and according to emails we have many more shipments to come. The girls have really enjoyed opening each box and choosing their next book.

Workbased Learning

We have a new format in place for class this year. Each girl is given a binder at the beginning of the quarter with several assignment descriptions to complete in nine weeks. An example of the assignment could be to draw, design, digitize, and stitch a sample logo for a sports team. The girls have been very busy getting to know how to use the digitizing software, and how to correct tension and inaccurate stitches on the machines. Although some moments are frustrating, the rewards of having a customer pick their design is priceless. There are also two

girls working in the community. They are not only gaining first hand working skills, but they are drawing an income.

Health

TaiAnna Moe's health class have been focusing on being "Physically Fit". They have practiced taking their heart rate and have learned the appropriate ranges for heart rates while working out. As a class they have been working on the Turbo Jam video and plan on getting into some Tae-Bo videos as well. The next chapters have to do with eating habits and personal hygiene.

Responsible Life Choices

Teresa Bogie's RLC class began the semester with human sexuality and the changes our bodies experience during adolescence. In mid-November, the class took part in the Reality Works RealCare Parenting Program. The program is an amazingly realistic infant simulation that offers learning by doing. Each student was assigned a "baby" to provide everyday necessities for such as feeding, burping, rocking, and diaper changing. The student cared for the "baby" for a minimum of 24 hours including bringing to any appointments, outings, etc. The parenting experience allowed students to draw their own conclusions and discover for themselves what the role of

Heartland continues on page 9



New Face in Cooperative Purchasing

By Shareen Neumann, Sales and Marketing/Cooperative Purchasing Coordinator

There is a new face in the Cooperative Purchasing Department at the SW/WC Service Cooperative. Shareen Neumann began her duties as Sales and Marketing/Cooperative Purchasing Coordinator on December 8th, 2008. While Shareen is new to Cooperative Purchasing, she is not new to the Service Cooperative. She previously worked for the SW/WC Service Cooperative as a Shared Accountant/UFARS Specialist. Shareen looks forward to visiting each member district in the near future. If you have a purchasing question or need, or would like to visit with Shareen about how the Service Cooperative can better serve you, please give her a call at (507)537-2279 or on her cell: (507)828-1192; or e-mail her at shareen.neumann@swsc.org.



Marshall High School's Agricultural Education Department

By Paul Lanoue, Marshall High School Agricultural Education Department Instructor

Students in the Marshall High School Agricultural Education Department have the opportunity to earn 4 credits through the University of Minnesota this spring semester through the College in the Schools: Crops, Environment and Society course. The course materials and exams are prepared by University of Minnesota professors and delivered by high school instructor Paul Lanoue at the Marshall High School. Students will focus their attention to learning about various crops along with the various environmental requirements for planting them along with the environmental impact upon various production techniques.

Marshall FFA advisor was recently named as the Minnesota Farm Bureau FFA Advisor of the Year. Paul was awarded this distinction in December at the MN Farm Bureau Annual Meeting. Five of his students and a school board member surprised him by coming to the event to congratulate and celebrate this accomplishment. As part of the prize, Paul and his wife had the opportunity to travel to the American Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in San Antonio, TX during the middle of January. Pictured are Mr. Lanoue and the Marshall FFA Team.

Marshall High School students have the opportunity to explore everyday science through a new course offered through the Agricultural Education Department. The Agriculture course will focus on the science of biofuels along with the challenge of feeding our world by addressing the cultural and scientific aspects involved. English Language Learners will enhance classroom discussion through their diverse experience and allow for a real-world application of agriculture to the lives of all students.



Why Is Energy Such A Big Deal?

By Dennis Drummond, Energy Service Group

Our Minnesota school buildings consume significant amounts of energy and this amount seems to be getting more expensive each year. The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that school districts can cut those energy expenses by at least 25 percent. And, some Minnesota school districts are doing just that and saving thousands of dollars annually. Architects, engineers, facility managers, and school administrators owe state taxpayers the most efficient and cost-effective structures possible.

Through good leadership and planning ahead, energy costs in our school buildings can be reduced while still enhancing occupancy comfort, raising indoor air quality, improving the learning environment, extending life expectancy of each building, and doing something to help our environment. As conscientious care takers of school facilities, school district leaders must frequently reexamine the current energy conditions of their buildings, their operating procedures, their operating budgets, and their maintenance procedures.

This publication offers a brief overview of energy saving concepts for school administrators, facility managers, teachers and maintenance staff. However, nothing will produce energy savings without the commitment of each district's superintendent and school board.

Ideas presented here are not without precedent; they have been and are currently being used by a number of Minnesota school districts with great success. These ideas can help your district develop its own, customized program to control energy costs. Under your leadership, your district can be an Energy Champion!

How Does Your District Score on this "Two-Minute Energy Quiz"?

The following 2-minute test assesses your district's energy condition: If you can answer "yes" to at least twelve of the quiz questions, your district is doing a great job with energy efficiency. If you scored less than twelve "yes" answers, consider contacting either ESG or your service cooperative for assistance with addressing these issues.

1. Have you completed a comprehensive energy audit of your existing buildings?
2. Have all your building operators received energy management training?
3. Does maintenance staff perform regular preventative maintenance to keep equipment running at optimum efficiency?

4. Have you installed state-of-the-art energy controls in all buildings to set-back buildings after school, weekends, and holidays by 10-15 degrees?

5. Are each building's utility bills tracked through usage reports that are passed to principals and/or facility administrators?

6. Does your district have an incentive plan for individual schools to share in their energy savings?

7. Have excessive peak load demand and power factor charges been mitigated?

8. Have you talked to staff about the people factor? (i.e. Asking faculty, students, principals, and maintenance staff to do all possible to avoid energy waste, such as turning off lights and not using space heaters?)

9. With budgets tight, have you really considered the funding options for HVAC equipment upgrades: i.e. rebates, performance contracts and energy equipment leasing?

10. Have you increased rather than decreased your maintenance and operations budget this year?

11. If you are building, have you challenged your architects and engineers to design new schools that exceed current energy code by 25 percent?

12. Has your district standardized on the purchase of Energy Star rated products as products-of-choice (computers, lamps, printers, etc)?

13. Have you rated any of your buildings for Energy Star recognition through the LEED program?

14. Do you have Energy Patrols organized for any of your elementary or middle school buildings?

15. Have you worked with the non-profit National Energy Foundation to incorporate energy in school curriculum?

16. Does your district order and operate alternative fueled school buses and vehicles (natural gas, biodiesel, etc.)?

The Energy Management Team develops an Energy Action Plan

Any district who is a part of the Service Cooperative can invite a representative from "Energy Services Group" headquartered in Wayzata for an initial "Preliminary Study" of their facilities. It is not necessary to hire expensive out-of-state energy consultants. ESG has all of the expertise you will need right here thru your service cooperative. Contact retired Superintendent Dennis Drummond @ (218) 234-1646 or via e-mail @ Dennis.Drummond@1ESG.com.

Heartland *(Continued from page 8)*

a parent feels like. The class highly anticipated the program.

DD Riding

The Heartland Ranch School participated again this year with the Benson Public Schools DAPE class in a project called DD Riding. Some students from Heartland Ranch School help Benson Public School students who have physical and mental disabilities ride horses. They also teach the kids how to groom and saddle the horses. The project lasted 2 weeks and went very well. Everyone worked well together and it was great to see relationships being built.

Life Skills Workshop

In November the juniors and seniors attended a Life Skills Workshop at Southwest Minnesota State University. This workshop offered different classes on banking, customer service, and living on their own. They had the opportunity to ask a panel of employers how they go about hiring someone, what they might get asked in an interview, and the proper way to go about asking for an application.

Project Tomorrow

In December the girls attended "Project Tomorrow", a program at the Prairie Correctional Facility at Appleton, MN, put on by a team of carefully screened inmates to discuss high-risk issues such as poor family relations, alcohol, drugs, poor self-esteem, and poor attitudes towards school and academics.








The selected inmates have accepted full responsibility for their crimes and are interested in helping teens make positive choices. The prisoners receive no extra perks for belonging to this program. They have all volunteered to help youth as part of their own recovery and in an effort to save teens from becoming criminal adults.

"Project Tomorrow" can be an emotionally intense program and it leaves a definite and positive impact on those attending. For more information about Project Tomorrow contact the Prairie Correctional Facility, Appleton, MN (320) 289-2052.

2008 Finance Awards

By Shelly Maes, Manager of Member Services

Congratulations to the following schools for receiving 2008 School Finance Awards from MDE:

-  E.C.H.O Charter School
-  Luverne Public Schools
-  Marshall Public Schools
-  Pipestone Area Schools
-  Willmar Public Schools
-  Worthington Area Language Academy
-  Worthington Public Schools

Congratulations To Bronze Medal Schools

By Shelly Maes, Manager of Member Services

In December, U.S. News & World Report released its 'Best High Schools' report. This report analyzed academic and college-readiness performance data from more than 21,000 public high schools across the country to find the very best—and ranked them gold, silver and bronze.

We had seven schools in our region on the bronze medal list:

-  Lakeview Public Schools
-  Minneota Public Schools
-  Ortonville Public Schools
-  Red Rock Central Public Schools
-  Renville County West Public Schools
-  Tracy Public Schools
-  Wabasso Public Schools

Congratulations to the School Boards, Superintendents, and staff of these districts on achieving this honor!



Marshall High School Offers New Internship Program

By Cecelia Danahar, Marshall High School, Career Internship Program Instructor

Marshall High School is excited about a new internship program which started this school year. Each year many bright and talented Marshall High School graduates go away to college and never return to the greater Marshall community for employment. The departure of talented young people represents a major loss to the community. The Career Internship Program was developed with this problem in mind. It was thought that if students are employed with a Marshall company over a period of time in their junior and/or senior years in high school and came back to that company for summer employment that perhaps they will have established a business connection and they may return to Marshall to work after college.

The program is designed to enrich and enhance a student's learning through real world applications. Student participants in the Career Internship Program not only obtain business connections, but they also gain a rich perspective on career options and alternatives through practical observations and interactions with individuals in their field of interest. These experiences help students develop their career interests and clarify career choices as the student is preparing to finalize college enrollment decisions related to their future careers.

The program blends the areas of career awareness and experiences with a curriculum component. Four days of the school week the students go to their internship site during 4th block and one day a week during 4th block they attend class at the high school relating to the internship program. While the internship provides the opportunity to explore in great depth a career interest, the other components of the class develop areas that many classes do not address, but that are very important for the student's success in their given career and life in general. One such component is etiquette. A few minutes of each class are devoted to teaching rules of etiquette. The students learn such things as: how to

shake hands; how to make introductions; proper dining etiquette; interview etiquette; telephone and e-mail etiquette; and many other useful etiquette rules.

The class also engages in a round table discussion each week which encourages students to express their opinions about controversial topics and it teaches them to accept that others may have differing points of view. The class also



focuses on learning through listening and asking questions. The students are taught to be active learners. The instructor does not lecture, but instead engages the students in discussion and exercises that enable the student to ask questions to gather information. When the students go to their internship sites they are not only going to learn about a career, they are, perhaps for the first time, going into the community and into a professional setting. They must

know how to behave properly and learn to converse with adults. They will gain more knowledge from their mentor if they don't just observe, but if they engage their mentor in conversation and seek the answers to questions. All of these skills are vital in today's workplace which require employees to be engaged and active problem solvers.

The course emphasizes the expectations career professionals face in today's workplace regarding interpersonal communication, decision-making, ethical behavior, professional conduct, project completion, team building, and time and resource management. The students receive Marshall High School credit along with 2 college credits from Minnesota State Community and Technical College. The students complete a final project which is displayed at an open house at the end of each semester.

The success of this program is dependant upon collaboration among business leaders, civic leaders, community organizations and the school. The program could not exist

Administrative Services *(Continued from page 14)*

3. Vision: Based upon the Mission Statement, a vision will be created that explains "What we want to be or where we want to go" as a district;

4. Environmental Scan (SWOT Analysis): Determine what strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are facing the district; and

5. Strategic Goals: Based upon the Mission, Vision and environmental scan, identify three to five strategic goals.

Upon completion of these steps, a formal presentation of the plan will be made at a meeting of the school board. Once the school board approves the plan, the district will begin the real work of strategic planning, which is a) to identify the individuals or groups that will be responsible for the implementation of each goal; b) to prepare action plans timelines for implementation of each goal; and c) to prepare a schedule through which each group will make regular and periodic reports back to the board on their progress and activities.

FOLLOW-UP: The facilitators will be available for consultation or to answer questions, but the actual implementation will be handled locally. After a year, the facilitators will return to meet with the planning committee and implementation committees to review the progress.

Board Development/Training: Sometimes, rather than to embark into the strategic planning process, a board may want to look at a program of board development or board training. Depending upon the needs within a particular district, we provide training and development opportunities for administrators and board of education members covering a variety of topics. Among the topics that can be covered are:

1. Roles and Responsibilities (board members and administrators);
2. Role of the Board in Curriculum and Finance;
3. Team Building;
4. Chain of Command;
5. Personal Agendas among board members and administrators;
6. Single/Special Interest Groups or Individuals; and
7. Board Orientation (development and/or facilitation).

The elements and number of training sessions included in this program can be structured in a way that meets the unique needs of the district.



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From the Desk of the Director of Administrative Services

By Luther Heller, Director of Administrative Services

Reducing Energy Costs to Schools

Over the course of the past several months, we have run several articles in The Review and in the SW/WC SC Member Newsletter relative to the potential impact of high energy costs on a school district's budget and about the need to find a way to maintain some budget certainty with regard to energy costs. As has been previously mentioned, the SW/WC Service Cooperative has partnered with Summit Energy Services to create a cooperative venture designed to take advantage of potential opportunities for schools to purchase their natural gas from alternative suppliers at prices typically lower than the traditional utility companies.

The program, as originally designed, provides districts with the opportunity to take advantage of group purchasing of utilities, bill review, consolidated billing, consumption histories, along with many other services. In addition, the program provides the participating districts with a means of managing energy charges and providing budget stability and predictability.

Although we are only three months into the program, we are working on some revisions to the program that will provide an opportunity for current program participants and for those districts not currently participating in the program, who would like to become program participants, to fix their energy costs at a rate similar to or below today's rates. As many of you have probably noticed, the energy markets have been retreating dramatically off their summer highs. As a matter of fact, natural gas is currently trading at a four year low.

This being said, we are working on a means of providing a current market opportunity to lock in a portion of your natural gas rates for the remainder of this fiscal year and next fiscal year (April 2009 – June 2010). Whereas, we think that natural gas may continue to trade a little lower; experience tells us that the market historically bottoms out around the end of January.

We would like to offer this rate to those desiring price certainty with respect to next year's natural gas costs. At this time we have absolutely no indication where the market or utility's pricing will be for next winter, but we do however see this as an attractive opportunity given the recent volatility in the energy markets.

Under this program modification, a district would

continue to stay on the same rate they are currently on with their utility provider and will continue to purchase gas from that provider, as in the past. At the end of each month, a comparison will be made between the monthly gas cost with the price that we have guaranteed and generate either a credit (if the utility price was higher) or an invoice (if the utility price was lower) to the district for the difference times a pre-determined usage estimate. We can offer this product due to the strong relationship between the utility's monthly pricing and the prevailing monthly market pricing. Another advantage to this program is it will allow districts to include all of their district's gas meters and not just the largest, as in the current transport program.

Within the next couple of weeks, the SW/WC Service Cooperative and Summit Energy will be hosting a series of meetings to explain the program and to answer any questions that might arise.

Planning and Training

The SW/WC Service Cooperative provides, at no cost to a member school district, assistance in the planning process. The assistance may be a formal strategic planning process, or it may be modified to meet a specific need by a district, i.e. restructuring of grade levels, configuration of the district office, board member training, etc.

Regardless of whether we look towards a traditional strategic planning process or a modification to meet a particular need, it will be to lead the participants towards thinking more strategically. In this manner, the participants will begin to assess the future effects of outside influences as they identify and solicit input from key stakeholders. In addition, they will work on a plan for moving the district forward.

Strategic Planning: Depending upon what plans a district already has in place, as well what the district hopes to accomplish through the planning process, the planning process will require 3 to 6 sessions, with each session lasting approximately 2 hours. Through the planning process, the SW/WC Service Cooperative facilitators will take the board and/or planning committee through the following steps:

1. **Introduction:** An overview of the strategic planning process and the goals of the process;
2. **Mission:** The development of a statement that defines who or what the district is;

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Internship Program *(Continued from page 10)*

without local businesses and entities opening their doors to the students. Each afternoon that the students in the Career Internship Program leave the High School and go to a local business, the hospital, a dentist office, or a physical therapist's office and they meet with a mentor, the student and the professional are working together to further the education of the student and hopefully they will create a partnership that will last beyond the student's high school years.



More Than Meets the Eye

By Beth Webb, Cottonwood River Integration Collaborative Coordinator

When you walk into the Sleepy Eye Spanish classroom, you step into a different atmosphere. For the past 3 months, students in Mr. Jonathan Olson's Spanish class, grades K-6, have been learning about the rainforest. While the construction of this truly amazing scene is a sight to see, the life lessons that occur within this classroom are what are truly wonderful. Spending one day per week studying the Spanish language, and one day per week studying people of another culture, students in Sleepy Eye are learning to view the world through the eyes of another.

The culture kickoff began with the reading of the book "The Great Kapok Tree" by Lynne Cherry. In this book Cherry takes readers on a journey of a man who is sent into the rainforest to chop down a tree. Along the way he falls asleep. It is while he is asleep that he learns about the vitality of life the tree provides to others.

During this unit, the various grade levels worked together learning about cultures of people who live in rainforest regions of the world, including family life, food, occupation, pastimes, and transportation. The students enjoyed learning about life in other parts of the world, as well as constructing a visual reminder of their learning experience.

The Sleepy Eye Spanish program is part of the Cottonwood River Integration Collaborative (CRIC). CRIC serves the communities of Cedar Mountain, Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop, New Ulm, Sleepy Eye, Springfield, and St. James. The collaborative works to bring K-12 educational programs to communities to address cultural and language barriers, as well as promote intercultural competency and integration among communities and schools.

Working together, we continue to grow in the knowledge and respect of sharing our world with people of many cultures.



Regional Low Incidence Projects Take a Huge Budget Cut

By Bob Braun, Director of Teaching and Learning Services

On October 29, 2008, Regional Low Incidence Projects were informed by the MN Department of Education that they would no longer be allowed to collect state aids on Low Incidence consultant positions. The total cut for Regional Projects totaled around 2.5 million dollars. Region 6 & 8 Low Incidence Project was cut about \$330,000 per year. The dilemma that faced the Regional Projects was how to continue to provide the array of services to students with Low Incidence Disabilities in light of the 30% budget cut. Since October 29th, SW/WC Service Cooperative has been taking input from Superintendents, Special Education Directors and others who are going to be impacted by this cut.

On January 10, 2009, a plan was revealed to deal with this 30% shortfall in Low Incidence funding for the 2009-2010 school year. This plan took into consideration preserving as many services as possible and preserving as many jobs as possible. At this point we feel we have accomplished what we needed to do. Making minimal cuts, we are preserving the array of services we currently provide and

preserving as many jobs as possible.

The array of services will stay intact, but obviously the amount of available services will be impacted. One of the major concerns that faced us as we went through the planning process was the question relating to maintenance of effort. We believe there is no maintenance of effort issue in Region 6 & 8.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact bob.braun@swsc.org or 507-537-2252.

Shared Service Project

By Jennifer Mahan-Deitte, Coordinator of Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction/School Improvement

Since September of 2009, three school districts from the southwest/west central region of Minnesota have been working collaboratively to create a team of schools that 'share services' across district lines. This consortium of schools (Edgerton, Lynd, and Pipestone) is working cooperatively to create a common curriculum cycle, share best practices with one another, share expertise between district staff, and to collaborate on staff development trainings.

Among the many goals agreed upon, one has come to the forefront: establish a creative and collaborative team of schools that makes decisions regarding curriculum, assessment, and instruction based on data, best practices, and common sense. Student achievement, fiscal savings, and capacity building will be the end results of working toward this main goal.

By year's end, the three districts currently participating in the 'Shared Services Project' will have purchased a web-based curriculum mapping program, completed curriculum maps on science, and be preparing to pilot various science programs during the '09-'10 school year. Individually, each school has received help with coordinating staff development meetings (Pipestone), running PLCs (Pipestone), instructing staff on Guided Reading (Lynd), and curriculum mapping Language Arts (Edgerton).

The group is pushing to work with one another in the most progressive formats out there today. Collaboration is well underway, and several other school districts are coming on board to discuss the details of how a 'Shared Services

RMIC News

New Staff Member

The RMIC has added a new staff member to assist you! Please pass this information along to the appropriate people in your district to ensure everyone is aware of our changes. JoAnne Fraunfelder joined us on January 26, 2009. Joanne is replacing Shareen Neumann as our Shared Accountant/UFARS Specialist. Joanne comes to us from Marshall Public Schools where she served as the Finance Supervisor. You may contact Joanne by emailing her at Joanne.Fraunfelder@swsc.org

SMART System Partnerships with Outside Vendors

Regional staff are always looking for ways to ease the reporting burden and paper shuffle for our member districts. One of the ways we can do that is by forming partnerships with outside vendors.

Online Ordering

The online purchasing feature in SMARTeR provides an automated way for schools to have employees request supply orders. Once the request is made the purchasing department in the district will process for approval. Once approval has been made the order can be electronically submitted to a specific vendor. For a list of vendors who have partnered with SMART Systems please contact Mary Jo or Darin.

Pre-tax 3rd Party Vendors

SMART Systems offers vendor extracts that allow districts to create the pre-tax file(s) needed for reporting tax sheltered annuity and flex contributions to a 3rd party vendor.

Online Applicant / Recruitment

SW/WC Service Cooperative has entered into a partnership with AppliTrack which is an online applicant/recruitment application. RMIC staff participated in two demos of this software and feel confident that it is both affordable to our area schools and will prove to be an effective way to post and hire new positions.

We welcome your feedback and the opportunity to work with other outside vendors as the need arises within our school districts.

Services *(Continued from page 12)*

Project' could and should work for 2009-2010. Currently, two tentative calendars have been created for next year. This necessary step will allow schools to share staff development days making this training as robust as possible...with more resources, they now have more options.

Most districts have identified curriculum design, assessment, and instruction as the key areas in need of more attention. Very few schools currently employ a curriculum director. A Shared Services Project could allow for the sharing of such a person to address staff development, curricular, and student achievement needs in a fiscally conservative manner.

Northwest Evaluation Association - MAP

By Michael Koranda, Coordinator of School Improvement

SW/WC SC along with the other Minnesota Service Cooperatives have signed a state agreement with NWEA to provide services to you at a cooperative rate. Under this agreement, SW/WC SC can provide Step 2 Stepping Stones and Step 3 Climbing the Data Ladder at a lower fee. Also under this agreement you can receive consultation from the regional NWEA facilitator at a reduced cost to you. Michael J. Koranda is our NWEA facilitator for SW/WC SC and southern Minnesota. If you are interested in holding a training, or just having a refresher, please contact him at michael.koranda@swsc.org or via phone 507.537.2245.



SW/WC Service Cooperative's Division of
Teaching and Learning Presents...

25th Annual Special Education

Day of Excellence

Monday, March 16, 2009

8:30 a.m.-3:15 p.m.

Southwest Minnesota State University

Keynote Speaker: Deadra Stanton,

Creative Communications

For more information please contact:

Deecy Jesse

Phone: 507-537-2253

deecy.jesse@swsc.org



Specializing in SMARTBoards

Services continues on page 13

Upcoming Professional Development

To register for any of these workshops, please visit our website at www.swsc.org, click on Workshops, find the workshop you are interested in, and complete the registration information. If you have any questions about the registration process, please contact Dawn Christensen at dawn.christensen@swsc.org or 507-537-2278.

March 2009

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- 3/2 High Payoff Differentiated Strategies Workshop, Marshall
 - 3/5 Bringing Linear Algebra into the Lower Grades, Marshall
 - 3/5 New/Newer Superintendent Seminar, Marshall
 - 3/9 Podcasting, Marshall
 - 3/10 Moodle 101, Marshall
 - 3/10 Programs of Study, Minnesota West Granite Falls Campus
 - 3/11 Strategies for Increased Reading Achievement, Marshall
 - 3/12 Differentiation Through Personality Types, Marshall Middle School
 - 3/12 Programs of Study, Marshall
 - 3/13 MSTA Algebra Workshop #3, MRVED, Montevideo
 - 3/13 SMARTBoard Level 1 Training, Marshall
 - 3/16 25th Annual Day of Excellence Conference, SMSU, Marshall
 - 3/18 SMARTBoard Level 2 Training, Marshall
 - 3/20 MSTA Algebra Workshop #3, Marshall
 - 3/21 Teacher Relicensure Training, Marshall
 - 3/24 Regional Technology Coordinators Workshop, Marshall
 - 3/25 SMARTBoard Level 1 Training, Marshall
 - 3/31 Mission Organization (Using Graphic Organizers and Other Tools in Math), Marshall

April 2009

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- 4/4 Teacher Relicensure Training, Hutchinson Public Schools, Hutchinson
 - 4/8 Administrator's Forum, Marshall
 - 4/8 SMARTBoard Level 1 Training, Marshall
 - 4/15 CPI Refresher for Autism Spectrum Disorder, Marshall
 - 4/15 Advanced PowerPoint 2007 for Education, Marshall
 - 4/16 SMARTBoard Level 2 Training, Marshall
 - 4/17 MSTA Algebra Workshop #4, Marshall
 - 4/20 Podcasting, Marshall
 - 4/22 SMARTBoard Level 1 Training, Marshall
 - 4/23 Minnesota Sec. Transition Compliance Toolkit Training, Marshall
 - 4/24 MSTA Algebra Workshop #4, MRVED, Montevideo
 - 4/27 Integrated Facilities Planning, Marshall

May 2009

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- 5/6 Beginners Guide to PowerPoint 2007 for Education, Marshall
 - 5/13 Superintendent's Advisory Council, Marshall
 - 5/13 SMARTBoard Level 1 Training, Marshall

