

PRESS RELEASE

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Newaygo County students succeed at regional science fair— Teacher wins \$100 grant

Participating in the **25th Annual West Michigan Science Challenge (WMSC)** paid off for Newaygo High School Student Connor Ivens who earned a first place ribbon in the regional science fair which included students from Muskegon, Oceana, Ottawa, and Newaygo counties. Of the 81 total students, 13 received first place ribbons during the March 17, 2008, awards ceremony, and their teachers received \$100 grants to be used for science learning in their classrooms. Newaygo High School Teacher Holly Bowman earned a \$100 grant due to Ivens' performance. Last year Ivens was chosen as one of 40 national finalists for his experiment involving the search for cocaine residue on U.S. currency. He and his family won an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., where Ivens participated in a series of team-based, interactive scientific challenges focused on the environment. As a ninth grade student this year, Ivens does not qualify for the national competition which is limited to 5th through 8th graders.

The five other Newaygo County students who participated in WMSC were also recognized for their projects. Daisy Brook Elementary student Syrena May was honored with the Pi Chapter of the Alpha Delta Kappa Sorority Award. This award was given to four students whose projects showed determination plus scientific understanding of a unique project. In addition, student teams Jennifer David and Jessica Deater, and Alex Klimovitz and Michaela Stitt, all from Hesperia Middle School, earned second place awards for their projects.

Students in the 5th through 12th grades worked individually or in teams of two to come up with a problem and develop an experiment to be presented and judged at the science fair held at Muskegon Community College. Other participating schools included Allendale Middle, Beach Elementary (Fruitport), Bunker Middle (Muskegon), Ferry Elementary and Lakeshore Middle (Grand Haven), Muskegon Catholic Middle, Muskegon Christian, New Era Christian, Oakridge Middle, Shelby Middle, and Spring Lake Intermediate. The projects were judged by over 50 volunteers, including physicians, dentists, biochemists, surgeons, educators, engineers, and business people. They evaluated each project's methodology, variables, data collection and analysis, conclusions, visual and oral presentation.

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West Michigan Science Challenge is one of three student programs coordinated by the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District Regional Mathematics and Science Center. The **Michigan Aerospace Challenge**, which provides elementary, middle, and high school students the opportunity to develop payloads and launch student-built rockets, will take place on April 25 and 26, 2008. **Middle School Amusement Park Physics** will occur on May 14, 2008. All three programs require students to use their knowledge and skills to solve "real-world" problems. ###