

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Students advised to start now to succeed in science contest**

**West Michigan Science Challenge** (WMSC) officials are advising fifth through twelfth grade students (and teachers) to start working on their projects **now** in order to have the best chance at success in the upcoming regional science fair. “It’s time for students to come up with a problem to solve and begin their research,” said Marsha Green, Chair of the event. Students may work independently or in teams of two. Each year nearly 100 students from **Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, and Ottawa** counties compete in the annual regional science fair. Students must submit their application and project paper by **Thursday, March 9, 2009**, to be entered into the March 19, 2009, competition at Muskegon Community College.

Because the fair is affiliated with the **Society for Science & the Public** (SSP) Middle School Program, those 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who place first and are in the top 10% of WMSC winners will also receive an invitation to enter the SSP national competition. By doing so they could be named one of 300 national semifinalists and ultimately one of 30 finalists. The finalists win all-expense-paid trips to Washington, D.C., to compete for scholarships, trips, and other awards. In 2007, answering tough questions paid off for Connor Ivens, a student at Newaygo County Public Schools. He was chosen as a national finalist for his experiment involving the search for cocaine residue on U.S. currency. His complimentary trip to Washington, D.C. was spent participating in a series of team-based, interactive scientific challenges focused on the environment.

Over 70 volunteer judges, including physicians, dentists, biochemists, surgeons, educators, engineers, and business people, will apply an extensive list of criteria as they evaluate each project’s methodology, variables, data collection and analysis, conclusions and visual presentation. Up to four judges will be assigned to each project in one of five categories: plant (non-animal) biology, human/animal biology, physical science, engineering/mathematics/computers, and behavioral/social sciences. Students will also provide an oral presentation and answer questions posed by the judges. To learn more about how to get started, view science fair ideas, and download the 2009 Guidebook or an application visit: [www.muskegonisd.org/departments/mathscience/studentpgms/science-challenge/](http://www.muskegonisd.org/departments/mathscience/studentpgms/science-challenge/)

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