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Public Relations for the
Education Industry

NECC Dispatch

You Can Never Have Enough Cheese in Your News

Texas, By its Symbols

- *Bird* – Mockingbird
- *Large mammal* – Texas longhorn
- *Small mammal* – Armadillo
- *Flying mammal* – Free-tailed bat
- *Insect* – Monarch butterfly
- *Reptile* – Texas horned lizard
- *Fish* – Guadalupe Bass
- *Flower* – Bluebonnet
- *Plant* – Prickly pear cactus
- *Tree* – Pecan
- *Fruit* – Red grapefruit
- *Vegetable* – Sweet onion
- *Gem* – Texas blue topaz
- *Song* – “Texas, Our Texas”
- *Nickname* – The Lone Star State

Source:

www.enchantedlearning.com/usa/states/texas/

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Lone Star News...

Aventa Learning Offers Online Credit Recovery Program

Nearly 1.23 million students, most of whom are Latino and African-American students, were estimated to fail to graduate on time in 2008, according to the EPE Research Center. This staggering statistic, and other recent studies, are fueling national concern about high school dropouts, particularly as the federal government calls for changes to states' graduation rate calculation methods. To help schools improve student achievement and graduation gaps, Aventa Learning has significantly expanded its online credit recovery program for high schools to address the needs of at-risk students and English Language Learners. Aventa Learning Credit Recovery offers flexible implementation options to meet the varying needs of schools, minimizing staffing and facility costs while offering an enriching learning environment for students. For more information, go to www.aventallearning.com.

Key Curriculum Press Launches Sketchpad LessonLink

The Geometer's Sketchpad[®] is one of the most commonly used school software applications in the world. To help support teachers' use of *The Geometer's Sketchpad* in the classroom, Key Curriculum Press introduces *Sketchpad LessonLink*[™]. The new online, searchable library helps teachers integrate *The Geometer's Sketchpad* into their math curriculum with more than 500 activities designed for students in grades 3-12. Search options make it easy for teachers to find the perfect demonstration or student activity to develop or reinforce skills and concepts with dynamic, visual exploration. For more information, visit www.keypress.com.



PBS[®] Unveils Online Community for PreK-12 Educators

PBS Teachers Connect provides teachers, library media specialists, technology coordinators, early childhood educators and other education professionals with opportunities to share ideas, collaborate and support the effective use of instructional technology and multimedia in home and school learning environments. The new online community is built around PBS Teachers, the Web portal to PBS' rich array of instructional resources and professional development services. Educators can search more than 3,000 free standards-based classroom activities, lesson plans, interactive resources and other materials on the PBS Teachers site, then easily bookmark, annotate, share and manage their tagged content within the PBS Teachers Connect community. Many of the resources feature PBS' award-winning programming and content, including on-demand streaming video from select programs. Educators can apply to become PBS Teacher Leaders, who are instrumental in promoting community development and demonstrating exemplary digital media use in education. For more information, visit www.pbsteachers.org/connect.

Memorable Messages...

San Antonio Teachers to Get Tech Integration Certificate

PBS TeacherLine® recently teamed up with the San Antonio Independent School District to provide online professional development for educators in the district's Technology Integration Lead Teacher (TILT) initiative. The district aims to enhance the knowledge and skills of teachers who are responsible for instructional technology leadership in their schools, and to accelerate and improve technology integration district-wide. The *PBS TeacherLine ISTE Capstone Certificate Program* is a series of research-based, online facilitated courses that focus on instructional technology use, and enable teachers to demonstrate their mastery of ISTE National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers (NETS•T). The district is on track to reach its goals with 18 teachers scheduled to earn their certification this summer, and openings for 18 more who may begin the Capstone program in mid-fall 2008. To learn more about the TILT initiative, visit itls.saisd.net/tilt.

Funds For Learning Expands E-rate Manager

Every year a number of E-rate applicants – more than 500 in the past 10 years – are subjected to random audits by the Schools and Libraries Division of the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) for processes and receipts from past fiscal years. To help schools and libraries prepare for this scenario, Funds For Learning, LLC, the nation's leading E-rate funding compliance services firm, announces the addition of a new resource to *E-rate Manager for Applicants* designed to facilitate audit preparation by guiding applicants through each step of the process. For more information, visit www.fundsforlearning.com.

Excelsior Announces Extensive Expansion to Pinnacle

Committed to positively impacting student outcomes, Excelsior Software announces an extensive expansion to its *Pinnacle Suite* of products. The *Pinnacle Suite* now allows administrators and educators to access and manage curriculum, formative and summative assessments, and supplementary resources through one flexible, easy-to-use system. The company's electronic gradebook remains the core of the *Pinnacle Suite*. A combination of tools built and implemented by Excelsior Software for more than 20 years, others developed by GlobalScholar, and newly designed features, the *Pinnacle Suite* allows educators to access curriculum, assessments and supplemental resources through the industry's premier standards-based gradebook. For more information, visit www.excelsiorsoftware.com.

ePals Starts Discussion about Social Networking

With the release of the National Education Technology Standards for teachers (NETS-T), ePals, Inc., challenges educators, thought leaders and developers to move beyond a discussion of 21st century skills or technology integration, and toward considering a framework for evaluating solutions that build 21st century skills. ePals has developed a set of six questions to encourage conversation and invites education industry members to help complete the framework for assessing transformative solutions. Visit ePals' NECC blog (sites.epals.com/NECC2008) to join the discussion. "We believe the key is to use a holistic approach – a combination of innovative pedagogy through Internet connected communities, digital resources and Web 2.0 tools that empower teachers and students to master the curriculum and to explore issues beyond the classroom," said Ed Fish, President and CEO of ePals, Inc. For more information, visit www.epalscorp.com.

C. Blohm & Associates, Inc.

Remembering the Alamo



A significant Texas symbol, the Alamo is hallowed ground and the Shrine of Texas Liberty. The "Misión San Antonio de Valero" was established in 1718, one of a series of mission settlements built along the San Antonio river. Spanish military eventually took over the mission, setting up a cavalry unit and naming it the Alamo ("cottonwood") after their hometown, Alamo de Parras, Coahuila. Spanish, Rebel and Mexican militaries occupied the Alamo until the Texas Revolution of 1835-36, when Texian and Tejano volunteers expelled the Mexican soldiers and took control. Alamo defender Daniel Cloud wrote, "If we succeed, the Country is ours. It is immense in extent, and fertile in its soil and will amply reward all our toil. If we fail, death in the cause of liberty and humanity is not cause for shuddering. Our rifles are by our side, and choice guns they are, we know what awaits us, and are prepared to meet it." This perspective helps to explain why the defenders fought against such impossible odds; they saw the Alamo as key to the defense of Texas itself. The number of Alamo defenders grew to nearly 200, but they were no match for the army of General Santa-Anna. On March 6, 1836, after a bloody, 13-day siege, the Mexican army took back the Alamo, but Texas ultimately gained independence after forces led by Sam Houston defeated Santa Anna at the battle of San Jacinto.

The Alamo is open every day to visitors, as are other local missions.

Source: www.thealamo.org

Chili Enough for Ya?

Texas food combines traditional European cooking with Mexican cuisine – Tex-Mex. One of the most popular Tex-Mex concoctions is chili, proclaimed by the legislature to be the state dish of Texas. The prominence of chili dates back to the 1800s when the “Chili Queens” of San Antonio would sell chili in the Military Plaza Mercado. The Chili Queens would make vats of chili at home and transport them to the Plaza to sell to passersby. This practice carried on for decades until it was shut down in the late 1930s due to health concerns. However, reenactments of the Chili Queens began in the 1980s and this practice has become an annual event during Memorial Day weekend.

Source:

sanantonio.about.com/od/sanantoniofestivals/p/chiliqueens.htm

Quick Beef Chili

Bring a little Texas to your home with this recipe:

Ingredients

1 TB vegetable oil
 1 1/2 lb. lean ground beef
 1/2 cup chopped onion
 1 3/4 oz. chili seasoning mix
 1/2 cup water
 14.5 oz. can diced tomatoes, undrained
 15 oz. can kidney beans, undrained
 1 tablespoon brown sugar

Directions

Heat oil in a large, heavy skillet. Cook ground beef and onions over medium heat until no longer pink. Stir in chili seasoning mix, and add remaining ingredients. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 10 minutes. If you like, spice the chili up with hot ground pepper, chopped jalapeno or mild chiles, cilantro, or other favorites.

Source:

southernfood.about.com/od/groundbeefchili/r/bl30621u.htm

Spicy Tidbits...

New Clamshell Computing Solution from Fourier

Fourier Systems has launched a new high-powered and cost-effective computing solution in the Nova product line. Based on the same durability and flexibility offered by the *Nova5000*, the *NovaCentro* features a lightweight clamshell design, fast processor, and bundled software, providing educators and students with the tools they need to master the skills necessary to thrive in the 21st Century. “The *Nova5000* offers students and educators a great price-performing option – with color touch screen for space saving and easy maintenance. Based on the success of the *Nova5000* in the last two years, the *NovaCentro* gives users the same powerful student computing solution in a familiar laptop design,” said Dov Bruker, CEO of Fourier Systems. Weighing only 2.4 lbs and running either the Linux or Windows CE operating system, the *NovaCentro* is being offered by Fourier Systems as a low total cost-of-ownership device for under \$500. For more information, visit www.fourier-sys.com.



Discovery and Wilkes University Offer Master's Degree

Discovery Education and Wilkes University are launching an online master's degree program in instructional media. “Schools nationwide are making immense investments in digital media and educational technology, increasing the demand for skilled educators who can effectively implement those tools to improve student achievement,” said Bill Goodwyn, President of Discovery Education. The 30-credit instructional media program will prepare teachers to engage today's students in learning through digital media. Courses will focus on topics such as digital storytelling, using digital media in the classroom, using technology to support creativity, and applying brain-based theories of how students process information to technology integration. Prospective students are encouraged to visit www.wilkes.edu/instructionalmedia. For more information, visit www.discoveryeducation.com.

Califone Releases Sound Alert Headphone and Jackbox

To help educators and students combat unsafe listening practices, Califone International, Inc., introduces two products: the *Sound Alert Monaural Headphone* and the *Sound Alert Monaural Jackbox*. Many studies have found that irreparable hearing loss can result from high noise levels over extended periods of time, and the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders asserts that more than 30 million Americans are exposed to hazardous sound levels on a regular basis. Providing educators with a tool for managing students' listening habits, the *Sound Alert Headphone* and *Jackbox* display a bright red warning light when the volume is louder than the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)-recommended 85 decibel maximum level. For more information, visit www.califone.com.



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News Splash...

SIIA Announces Results of Vision K-20 Pilot Survey

During the past three months, educators nationwide have participated in the Software & Information Industry Association (SIIA) Education Division's Vision K-20 Pilot Survey. Focusing on goals outlined in the Vision roadmap, the survey addressed topics such as 21st Century tools, accessibility, differentiated learning, assessment tools, and enterprise support. Highlights from the Vision K-20 Pilot Survey results, which were expanded upon during the NECC press conference, included the following: the greatest progress has been made in the areas of enterprise support and 21st Century tools; the least progress has been made in the use of digital assessment tools; in general, institutions within the K-12 sector lag behind postsecondary institutions in their overall average measures of progress – by a factor of 10 percentage points; and the smallest institutions (encompassing less than 450 students) are considerably behind those at larger institutions in implementing the Vision goals. For more information, visit www.siia.net.

Sebit, LLC Partners with Learning.com to Expand Access to Adaptive Curriculum

Sebit, LLC, developer of *Adaptive Curriculum*, announces a partnership with Learning.com, provider of digital curriculum. This collaboration will offer teachers seamless access to *Adaptive Curriculum Activity Objects* through the Digital Learning Environment from Learning.com. Combining conceptual learning with state-of-the-art graphics, *Activity Objects* provide teachers with an interactive way to engage middle grade students in math, with the goal of improving students' academic performance in the classroom. For more information, visit www.adaptivecurriculum.com.



New Online Courses Focus on Ed Data as Change Agent

While school use of formative assessment continues to increase, many classroom teachers have not been trained to use assessment data effectively to modify instruction and accelerate student progress. STI introduces five online courses that cover formative assessment and data analysis topics to meet educators' professional development needs in these areas. The new courses are offered as a part of STI *Achievement Services*, a comprehensive professional development and consulting service offering that helps schools and districts address student achievement shortfalls. STI developed these courses to help schools conduct formative assessment and data-driven decision-making as part of an ongoing school or district-wide program: *Essentials of Formative Assessment*, *Standards and Performance Objectives*, *Preparing Students for Graduation*, *Implementing Instructional Strategies*, and *Using Data to Improve Instruction*. For more information, go to www.sti-k-12.com.



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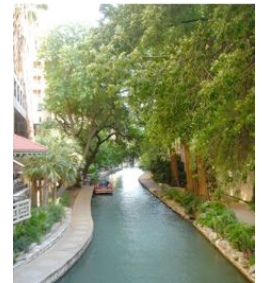
June 28 - July 1
Washington, D.C.



Walking The River

One of San Antonio's finest tourist attractions, the Paseo del Rio, or River Walk, consists of a network of pedestrian walkways along the river one story beneath downtown San Antonio. In the lively central section, numerous bars, shops and restaurants provide additional attractions for tourists and residents, while other segments feature gardens and quiet parkways. The River Walk connects some of the major tourist destinations in the area, such as the Alamo, the Rivercenter Mall, the Arneson River Theatre, and Hemisfair Park. Rio San Antonio Boat Cruises offer narrated tours of the river, and many restaurants provide boats for a "dining on the river" experience. There's even a location set aside exclusively for weddings, called Marriage Island.

Architect Robert Hugman created the River Walk as an alternative to paving over the San Antonio River. He decided to



make it a commercial area despite many warnings of flooding, and his office can still be found next to the Casa del Rio, one of the first river restaurants. Over the years, many improvements have been made to maintain and enhance the attraction, such as the pedestrian connector that links Alamo Plaza to the River Walk through the atrium of the Hyatt Regency hotel. Many events take place along the River Walk because of its lively, people-friendly atmosphere, including the Holiday River Parade and Lighting Ceremony, featuring, of course, many "floats."

Source:
www.thesanantonioriverwalk.com