Physics students gather at USU Lagoon Day

By:

Posted: 5/11/04

It's time for Utah State University's annual Physics Day when budding scientists descend on Utah's Lagoon amusement Park for hands-on learning experiences, academic competition and fun.

Friday, May 14, physics students from middle and high schools throughout the Intermountain West will explore such basic physics concepts as gravity and centrifugal force, all while enjoying the thrills of Utah's playground.

"The purpose of Utah State Physics Day is to motivate students' interest in science and to relate abstract concepts to familiar examples in a fun way," said J.R. Dennison. "What better laboratory to entice young people than an amusement park?"

Dennison, event chair and professor of physics at Utah State, said area students are building accelerometers and learning physics principles for a day of measuring forces, counting rotations, calculation maximum acceleration and, hopefully, not losing their lunches.

Last year's event drew more than 5,000 participants from 100 schools from Utah, Idaho, Nevada and Wyoming. For those in attendance this year, more than $55,000 in prizes and awards will be given to participants, including four-year scholarships to Utah State for high school students competing in the Physics Bowl competition.

Other activities include the G-forces contest, demonstration design, ride design and logo design contests.

Event participation has steadily grown since it was initiated by Utah State's physics department in 1990. The department sponsors the event, along with 15 other high-profile governmental, private and higher education organizations. Sponsors include: DuPont Holographics; Boeing; Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL); Lagoon; NASA Idaho Space Grant Consortium; NASA Rocky Mountain Space Grant Consortium; Thiokol Corporation; U.S. Navy; TRUTech; NitroCision; Marie Putnam; Ron and Susan Warnecke; Utah State's College of Science; Utah State's Office of Recruitment and Enrollment Services; and Mathsoft Engineering and Education, Inc.

The day's activities begin at 10:30 a.m. and conclude at 3:30 p.m. For more information about Utah State Physics Day, contact Ali Siahpush, program manager.

© Copyright 2007 The Statesman