

Physics Day at Lagoon

Corporate Sponsorship

Physics Day at Lagoon offers an excellent opportunity to promote science and mathematics to middle school and high school students throughout the Intermountain region. The underlying idea is to provide numerous real world examples to apply basic concepts studied in physics and physical science classrooms and to instill excitement about science through the use of hands-on investigations of examples found at an amusement park. Let's face it, roller coasters are a much more intriguing way to learn about conservation of energy or friction than balls rolling down an inclined plane.

The event is held in May at Lagoon Amusement Park just north of Salt Lake City. It has seen rapid growth in participation, with almost 6,000 students from over 120 schools from four states (UT, ID, WY, and NV) expected to participate in the seventeenth annual Physics Day on May 19, 2006. We have enjoyed a high profile with television coverage of the event from several stations each year, along with numerous radio spots and newspaper stories. For two years, the Governor has declared the day Physics Day in Utah and groups of teachers, students and sponsors have participated in a ceremony signing a proclamation.

The Physics Department at Utah State has actively pursued ways to extend Physics Day into the classroom throughout the year. These efforts have included developing a curriculum annual for teachers, a collection of related videos, running a summer workshop funded through the NASA Rocky Mountain Space Grant Consortium and the College of Science, and holding in-service training sessions for teachers with support from the Utah Office of Education and the Eisenhower Grant Program.

Corporate sponsorship is an essential part of Physics Day at Lagoon. Up to a dozen judges for various contests are provided by the sponsors, that helps provide essential manpower for the event. Many sponsors also bring display materials and demonstrations that provide the students in attendance with a sense of what scientists "do." In addition, many sponsors provide cash or in-kind contributions used for prizes for the contests. This year we will have ten contests and a less structured series of workbook activities for the students. A typical contest will award each winning student passes to Lagoon and Hansen Planetarium along with a selection of science-oriented prizes (\$150, \$100, and \$50 for first, second, and third place) split equally between the winning school science programs and students. As the attendance at Physics Day skyrockets, we are anxious to continue to provide sufficient prizes and an increased variety of activities to maintain very high student interest and effort.

The partnership appreciates whatever support you can give.

For additional information, please check out our web site at: www.physics.usu.edu/.