

USU Physics Day at Lagoon

Corporate Sponsorship

USU 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 concept 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 wooden blocks sliding down an inclined plane.

The event has been held in May at Lagoon Amusement Park just north of Salt Lake City for the last 26 years. It has seen rapid growth in participation, with almost 9,000 students from over 140 schools from four states (UT, ID, WY, and NV) expected to participate in the twenty-sixth annual Physics Day on May 15, 2015. Over the last 25 years, we have had more than 135,000 students and teachers participate, making this the largest and oldest (to our knowledge) STEM activity in the Intermountain West. 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.

The Physics Department at Utah State has actively pursued ways to extend Physics Day into the classroom throughout the year. These efforts have included providing a ~200 page curriculum manual for teachers, preparing annual student workbooks for high school and middle school students, an annual curriculum contest 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 two dozen judges for various contests are provided by the sponsors, that helps provide essential manpower for the event. One-on-one interactions between the students and judges are one of the most important aspects of the event. Many sponsors also bring display materials and demonstrations that provide the students in attendance with a sense of what scientists and engineers "do." In addition, many sponsors provide cash or in-kind contributions used for prizes for the contests, last year totaling about \$35,000. This year we will have thirteen contests and a less structured series of workbook activities for the students. A typical contest will award each winning student passes to Lagoon along with a selection of science-oriented prizes. 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/.