

Student Forum

...Teaming Up for a Better Tomorrow

Involving Tomorrow's Stakeholders Today

The U.S. Department of Energy Nevada Site Office Environmental Management (EM) Program is committed to education and sponsors a variety of activities throughout Southern Nevada. To further enhance its community outreach, the EM program created the EM Student Forum. The EM Student Forum is a pilot program, formed in 2001, designed to provide essential feedback on communications materials and product development. Comprised of a small group of 10-12 students from the Advanced Technologies Academy High School in Las Vegas, Nevada, the EM Student Forum works with members of the EM Public Involvement team to:

- Review draft informational materials and provide feedback regarding readability, subject understanding, and graphic appeal;
- Develop/produce outreach products, such as the newly completed EM Kid's Display;
- Support community outreach events in order to understand how the Public Involvement staff informs the public about EM programs through communication products; and
- Tour the Nevada Test Site to better understand the site and its mission.

And the Benefits Keep Growing...

GRANT AND HONORARIUM: Since its formation, the Nevada Site Office EM Student Forum partnership has been a win-win relationship for obvious reasons: the students gain hands-on, real-life experience by working as a team to provide the EM program much-needed feedback, and EM benefits from a fresh, innovative perspective. As the pilot program evolved during the first year, the opportunities grew and the EM program was able to furnish the school with a five-year, \$10,000 grant to be used toward equipment to benefit the students' education. The EM program was also able to provide an annual honorarium to students who successfully complete the program each year. Students can use the honorarium as they like, in whatever manner best helps them in future educational endeavors such as college, attending conferences in their field of study, or purchasing computer equipment.

IN-CLASS PROJECTS: As the students completed the draft of their first group outreach product, the EM Kid's Display, another opportunity presented itself: two students were able to complete the graphics portion of the display as part of their senior project. A partnership was formed between the teacher, the students, the EM Public Involvement team, and the outside vendor used to create the display pieces. Students gained hands-on experience working on a project that will be used to inform the public, while simultaneously building their portfolio and learning to work as a team with companies and clients.

INTERNSHIPS: Yet another door opened for the Student Forum and EM when the Public Involvement team needed additional internal support with graphic design. The Nevada Site Office was able to provide a student with the opportunity to complete not one, but two internships as a graphic designer, enabling EM to gain fresh ideas and much-needed programmatic support. In return, the student has gained real-life work experience for two consecutive summers.

EM

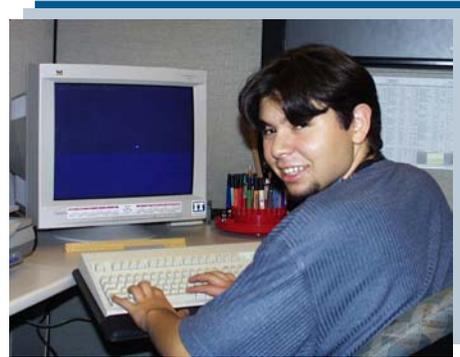
When Will Involving Tomorrow's Stakeholders Pay Off?

To put it simply, today!

The students' close partnership with the EM Program has provided opportunities to see and better understand the Nevada Test Site and its EM projects. By educating students, and involving their families and school faculty members, the students are able to pass on their expertise and knowledge beyond the classroom walls. The students' investment of their time and talents gives them a vested interest in the EM Program, the Student Forum and its future. For instance, the EM Kid's Display will inevitably be featured at future outreach events where students past and present can invite friends and family to see their product, thereby educating others through their work.

The EM Program has also seen a positive response to its newer communication products, such as its new fact sheets, to which the Student Forum provided input to the new look, layout and color scheme.

Due to the success of this program, future lawyers, doctors and business professionals are taking with them the knowledge of the Nevada Test Site's continuing efforts to reverse the effects of years of past nuclear testing, thus involving tomorrow's stakeholders today.



"I am choosing to use my honorarium to attend a conference in Boston. I look forward to meeting new people and learning new graphic design techniques that will help me in my field."

—Raul Beltran, EM Student Intern

For more information, please contact:

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to protect
your future**