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SCCC Holds Fifth Annual Xtreme Challenge

More than 250 students from 12 high schools competed in Xtreme Challenge contests on the campus of Seward County Community College/Area Technical School Wednesday.

The fifth annual Xtreme Challenge increased the fields of competition from nine to 12, adding English, health information management, and trade and industrial education.

The top three winners in each of the 12 categories were announced at an awards assembly following the academic challenges. The winners were presented prizes such as digital cameras, iPod Shuffles, and Flip camcorders.

The college also presented three scholarships from a drawing to Rene Boaldin of Elkhart High School, Beth Glave of Rolla High School, and Amy Mikles of Turpin High School.

Original organizer and business division chair Marcia Hatcher said she was pleased to see additional schools attending Xtreme Challenge and feels Wednesday's numbers show the event has outgrown the theater. High schools new to the competition this year included Garden City and Booker, Texas. They joined Elkhart, Rolla, Liberal, Turpin, Tyrone, Forgan, Satanta, Sublette, Moscow and Bucklin.

Elkhart High School earned the Overall Award by having more students with points in the top three places of the contests than any other school in attendance.

Elkhart sponsor Terri Houtz said she was excited to win first place outright. Last year, they shared the title with Rolla High School. Houtz said the 51 Elkhart students present were headed to Baker Arts Center for a tour and then would be rewarded with a stop for some shopping afterward.

Elkhart student Lacy Bookstore said the activities at Xtreme Challenge were fun and exciting. "The time that was spent there was well worth it," she said. "I had a great time."

Houtz expressed her appreciation to SCCC/ATS for having Xtreme Challenge as an event for the high school students.

"We were very pleased with the categories," she said.

Those categories included accounting, business administrative technology, agriculture, art, computer information systems, cosmetology, criminal justice, English, health information management, journalism, marketing/management, and trade and industrial education.

SCCC/ATS English instructor Janice Northern experienced her first year as a category coordinator, and offered both a fiction writing challenge in which students were to create an ending to a story and non-fiction writing challenge in which students wrote a personal essay.

"It went very well, and I was excited to see the quality of writing," Northern said. "We got some

excellent stories and essays.”

More than 18 enrolled in each of the first year English competitions, while art instructor Susan Copas saw her fourth year contests grow to more than 30 for each competition.

“I am very pleased with the participation,” Copas said.

Weather on Wednesday presented a mix of wind, rain, sleet and snow. Copas was afraid that would put a damper on the digital photography contest, which usually counts on outdoor photos. However, she said that she and the judges were pleasantly surprised with the creativeness of the photography entries.

“We were very impressed with the originality and the skill of the students,” she said. “We had a lot of water photos from the rain.”

Contest photo entries will be posted later on the art department’s Facebook page at Visual Arts at SCCC/ATS. Xtreme Challenge photos taken by Crusader student journalists at the college are posted under the multimedia link on CrusaderNews.com. The top 10 students in each of the individual competitions will be posted at scccxtremechallenge.blogspot.com.

Bud Smithson, director of the Area Technical School, said he was impressed with the enthusiasm of the high school students to try things they were interested in. The technical school offered hands-on challenges from the transportation group in auto and diesel, the construction cluster challenges were in computer aided drafting and architecture, and the manufacturing challenge was in machine tool.

“We thoroughly enjoyed being involved in our first year with Xtreme Challenge,” Smithson said. “We plan to expand and improve.”

Travis Perkins, Elkhart, the first-place winner in the trade and industrial category, voiced his approval.

“The challenge gave me a chance to show people what I can do in automotive mechanics,” he said. “I also was able to see the different programs the college has to offer.”

The 2010 Xtreme Challenge chair and criminal justice instructor Cristy Mulanax said she led the event mostly by sitting back and watching it come together in the fifth year since the college started the activity.

“I had so much trust in my colleagues,” she said. Each of the 12 areas that participate organizes its own competitions and prizes.

Business administrative technology instructor Gina Palmgren, who was the Xtreme Challenge co-chair this year, assisted Mulanax.

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