

**COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY**  
**JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 2006**  
**GOOD NEWS**

**BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES**

On Friday January 13, The Biology and Family and Consumer Science departments hosted the FFA Food Science Career Day event. Twelve high schools and 48 students participated. In addition to determining their range of knowledge, the teams were challenged to prepare a food product and market it to a panel of judges. They received their instructions and had one hour to develop a dipping sauce. The winning team was from Dassel-Cokato and will represent the area in the National FFA competition. The event was sponsored by a number of local food companies including Hormel, Davisco, Protient, SunRich, and Tony Downs.

Dr. Brock McMillan, Associate Professor, and his graduate student, Ryan Wersal, had the following paper accepted for publication: Wersal, R.M., B.R. McMillan, and J.D. Madsen. 2006. Food habits of migrating waterfowl in a prairie pothole system, Heron Lake, Minnesota. Canadian Field-Naturalist, in press.

Dr. McMillan also received the following grant: McMillan, B.R. 2006. The utility of wildlife crossings in road construction projects. Minnesota Department of Transportation, \$14,000.

Former graduate student Hoonbok Yi and professor emeritus Dr. Hyung Choe published a paper "Changes in Lipoxygenase Properties and Activity Related to Postgerminative Growth and Senescence in Oat (*Avena sativa* L. cv. Victory 1)" in the journal "Journal of Plant Biology", December 2005.

Zhang, E.T., **Ruhland** C.T. and T.A. Day. Exposure to solar UV-B radiation accelerates mass and lignin loss of *Larrea tridentata* in the Sonoran Desert. Submitted to *Plant Ecology*.

**COMPUTER AND INFORMATION SCIENCE**

Dr. Rebecca Bates, Assistant Professor, gave a presentation called "Tech Talk" at the 4th Annual Dakota County January Jumpstart on January 26, 2006. January Jumpstart is a day-long workshop to help displaced workers in their job searches.

Dr. Bates submitted a paper to the journal Speech Communication with her co-authors Mari Ostendorf and Richard A. Wright. The title is "Symbolic phonetic features for modeling of pronunciation variation".

**INTERIOR DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT**

Prof. Farid Sabongi, Assistant Professor, was invited to be a guest on the WCCO radio "Parade of Homes" show on Saturday, January 14 from 11 am to noon. Two other guests and Prof. Sabongi have been asked to talk about careers in the housing industry for professionals and skilled craftsmen. He was asked to represent Minnesota State University Mankato as a professor in the construction management major. The other guests are from a large homebuilding company and from one of the metro-area school districts.

The show will be an open discussion that is supposed to cover topics like the current availability of jobs in the industry, construction forecasts, and educational requirements for job seekers. Prof. Sabongi will be asked to talk about the construction management program at MSU, the education that our CM students receive, and the kinds of jobs that our students get once they graduate.

While the discussion won't be limited to any particular topics, the conversation will begin with these issues: present job market, anticipated changes in the job market in five years, interaction between hiring companies and the MSU program, advice to high school students who are considering a career in construction management, and the opportunities for adults who are older than traditional college students to go to college so they can make a career change.

### **MECHANICAL AND CIVIL ENGINEERING**

Patrick Tebbe, Assistant Professor, has received notice that the Engineering Directorate of NSF has recommended his proposal, "Development of Engineering Scenarios to Promote Student Engagement and Design in Thermodynamics Courses", for funding. The grant will seek to develop a new form of instructional material for several engineering courses and will utilize Prof. Stewart Ross and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning for assessment purposes.

### **PHYSICS AND ASTRONOMY**

Dr. Louis Schwartzkopf, Professor, was a presenter at Minnesota's Energy Future: Community Energy and Economic Opportunity Forum, held Thursday, January 19, at Gustavus Adolphus College. Dr. Schwartzkopf spoke on recent renewable energy work he has done in conjunction with the Region Nine Renewable Energy Task Force and the Southeast/South-Central Clean Energy Resource Team (SE/SC CERT).

Dr. Russ Palma, Professor, has been invited to give a talk "Stardust and Interplanetary Dust Particles: The Same Old Dust?" February 7 at Hamline University in St. Paul.

Dr. Palma has had his presentation "Genesis and Stardust: Exploring the Sun and Early Solar System" (originally given at the Young Scientist Roundtable, November 1, 2005) broadcast several times on the Wayzata school district cable television network in the Twin Cities West Metro area.

Dr. Palma has had two NASA sample proposals granted. As a result, he will be receiving samples from the recent return of the NASA/JPL Stardust Mission and also interplanetary dust particles from the curatorial facility at NASA-Johnson Space Center.