



News Release

For Immediate Release

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Southwest Wisconsin PLTW Consortium Wins National Recognition

Fennimore, WI— Representatives from local southwest Wisconsin high schools and Southwest Tech recently visited Washington, D.C. where they were one of ten groups recognized as Project Lead The Way (PLTW) Model Schools. The award application from southwest Wisconsin was selected from among 52 schools representing 32 different states. The coalition of schools known as the Southwest Academy for 21st Century Excellence includes high schools in Argyle, Cuba City, Highland, Iowa-Grant, Platteville, Prairie du Chien, and Southwest Tech in Fennimore.

Nominated schools were judged against 37 performance indicators, within nine quality categories. A selection panel of PLTW state leaders and affiliate directors led the evaluation process. The PLTW website stated that the rationale for selection of the Southwest Academy for 21st Century Excellence as a national leader was that the program “represents an ideal solution for small rural schools. It features a consortium of seven schools and Southwest Wisconsin Technical College that cooperatively share important resources, such as software, equipment, and materials. The consortium brings science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education to 2,000 students within a 100-square-mile radius in rural Wisconsin.”

One factor that differentiated the southwest Wisconsin application over other programs was that the capstone learning experience for participating students involved a partnership with Southwest Tech. The engineering design and development course involves students working in teams to construct solutions for various engineering problems. Through engaging, hands-on learning experiences, students gain knowledge in STEM fields.

“Schools participating in PLTW in our district are smaller than most in the program. The capstone partnership with Southwest Tech allows the STEM education to come full circle. This experience might not be possible without additional resources provided by the College and it is important to ensure that all students, no matter what their zip code, have the same advantages,” stated Southwest Tech curriculum developer Julie Pluemer.

The PLTW capstone experience was facilitated by Scott Swan, an Engineering Technologist program instructor at Southwest Tech. The Engineering Technologist program combines the foundational skills related to industrial engineering with the techniques of computerized manufacturing. Swan was a natural fit to teach the capstone course since his degree program strongly incorporated the develop STEM skills in Southwest Tech students.

“I’ve always been impressed with the PLTW curriculum and the numbers of large national corporate backers who take an interest in seeing young people develop STEM knowledge,” stated Swan. “The students have a great time working with robots and other technology while having their eyes opened to all the exciting opportunities in engineering and manufacturing.”

The 10 winning PLTW Model Schools were honored at the PLTW 2010 National Innovation Summit in Washington, DC, October 20th through the 22nd. Project Lead The Way, Inc., is a national, non-profit organization that is the leading provider of rigorous and innovative STEM education curricular programs used in K-12 schools. The PLTW comprehensive curriculum, which is collaboratively developed by PLTW teachers, university educators, engineering and biomedical

professionals, and school administrators, emphasizes critical thinking, creativity, innovation and real-world problem solving. The hands-on, project-based program engages students on multiple levels, exposes them to areas of study that they typically do not pursue, and provides them with a foundation and proven path to college and career success. PLTW began in 1998 in 12 high schools in upstate New York as a program designed to address the shortage of engineering students at the college level and has grown to a network of approximately 4,000 middle and high schools in 50 states and the District of Columbia. More than 350,000 students are expected to take a PLTW course during the coming school year. For more information, visit www.pltw.org.

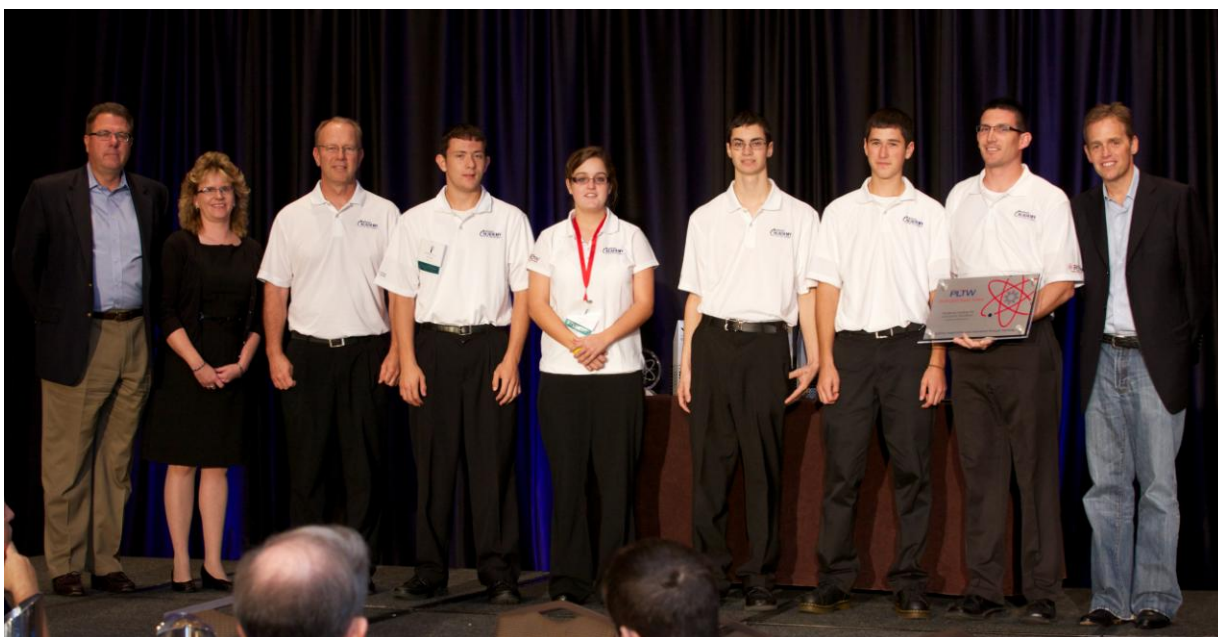


PHOTO (L to R): Greg Quam, Platteville High School; Julie Pluemer and Scott Swan, Southwest Tech; Coda Phillips, Platteville High School; Allie Clausen, Prairie du Chien High School; Michael Melssen, Southwest Tech; Jeffrey Kussmaul, Prairie du Chien High School; Mitchell Tollefson, Prairie du Chien High School; and John Lock, CEO of Project Lead the Way.