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MINNESOTA ANNOUNCES U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY PARTNERSHIP
Minnesota students to develop STEM skills through Real World Design Challenge

Roseville – Minnesota students will have an opportunity to participate in a Real World Design Challenge through a partnership between the U.S. Department of Energy and the Minnesota Department of Education intended to engage, inspire and educate Minnesota students in science, technology, engineering and math fields (STEM).

“This is an incredible opportunity for Minnesota and Minnesota students to be engaged with the STEM fields and be inspired by scientists and other professionals in real world settings,” said Minnesota Commissioner of Education Alice Seagren.

The goal of the Real World Challenge is to inspire and engage all students in STEM and systematically highlight the potential future for those who choose science and engineering careers. The Challenge will include ten states in the pilot and will be conducted during the 2008-09 academic year.

After learning the basics of design, teachers and students will be challenged to come up with innovative solutions to an engineer designed challenge. Classroom experiences will teach students to work as global engineering teams. The Challenge will be issued to participating teams this fall.

Topics increase in sophistication from the Governor’s Challenge to the National Challenge. School teams across the state will compete to solve the Governor’s Challenge. The Challenge submissions will be evaluated by a Peer Review Committee and the winner of the Governor’s Challenge will go on to represent the state at the National Challenge in Washington, D.C.

Participating schools will receive teacher training on Pro/ENGINEER software and other tools. All software and curriculum materials will be provided free of charge.

The Real World Design Challenge aligns secondary education with 21st Century workforce needs and strengthens the professional development of teachers through training and support by mentors from National Laboratories. The Real World Challenge harnesses the scientific and engineering expertise of National Laboratories using web-based professional collaboration tools to break down the geographic limitation that previously restricted student interaction with experts.

Participants in the Real World Challenge will be able to participate in the Minnesota Governor’s Challenge this spring and earn the chance to qualify for the National Real World Challenge. For more information, contact John Rapheal by email at john.rapheal@state.mn.us or at 651.582.8682.