

Five Grant-Winning Delta County Teaching Summaries Shared Online by Arch Coal Foundation

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Somerset, Colo., Sept. 4, 2013 -- The Arch Coal Foundation has shared on its [website summaries](#) of five new innovative teaching grant projects tested during the past school year. According to Jim Miller, general manager of Mountain Coal Company's West Elk mine, the five examples highlight the great variety of innovative teaching ideas shown by Delta County, Colo., educators to enhance student learning.

"Our Delta County teachers provided some amazing experiences during the past school year for our children, and these five grant winners were among the very best," said Miller. "The application process has opened for this school year, and we are eager to see what type of ideas the teachers propose."

The five projects highlighted on the Arch Coal website include:

1. *Writing with the Stars*, Kreszenze (Kriss) Allen, Paonia Junior-Senior High School. Allen wanted to provide an opportunity for her language arts students to learn from experts. She used her grant to organize a writers' conference where her students learned about writing from published authors who live nearby. The event included formal presentations and small group discussions with the authors, as well as a poetry slam. Allen's grant helped put literature "into her students' lives" and helped them develop writing skills that will benefit them for the remainder of their lives. While her "Writing Celebration" lasted one day, the impact of that day's activities, plus the materials provided by the grant, supported her classroom efforts for the remainder of the year.
2. *Getting from Point A to Point B*, Dan Dunham, Delta Middle School, Delta, Colo. With an earlier grant, Dunham's advanced technology classes built a drift boat. To complete the project, during the second semester of the 2012-2013 school year, his classes designed and built a trailer to haul the boat. Because class structure allows students only a few hours a week to work on the project, his students learned that "it is far easier to do something right the first time." Dunham says the project has equipped middle school students with a wide variety of practical skills such as reading blueprints and learning the fundamentals of welding, and Dunham is eager to share his project with other teachers. "S.T.E.M. (science, technology, engineering and math) activities foster team work, problem solving and show students why they need to learn a wide variety of math and science skills," he says.
3. *Community Optical Boost*, Jamie Roeber, Hotchkiss High School, Hotchkiss, Colo. Stretching her students' artistic talents, as well as improving the aesthetic appeal of their city, Roeber introduced students to proper airbrush techniques and how to clean and maintain the equipment. Students then did a practice project before airbrushing a huge Hotchkiss High School bulldog mascot on the side of the public works building. "I wanted to enrich the learning experience of my students with a hands-on project, as well as encourage them to better their community and foster civic pride through outreach," Roeber said. As the project unfolded, student interest grew significantly in this new art medium. The project also taught team work, organization and problem-solving, and helped students better understand that reaching out to others is a reward in and of itself.
4. *No ... Not Opera!*, Joe Siennicki, Garnet Mesa Elementary, Delta, Colo. Siennicki's fourth- and fifth-grade students experienced opera through a variety of activities in an effort to develop an appreciation for an art form they often don't experience. He used DVDs and CDs of operatic performances to increase student awareness, tied in story writing exercises, and took advantage of the Central City Opera Company to expand his lesson plans. Several of the opera company's members presented a brief performance before the school's entire student body. Siennicki believes the performers had a huge, positive impact on the students.
5. *Innovative Partnerships in Water Quality*, Debbie Yeager, Delta Opportunity School, Delta, Colo. Yeager's goal was to allow her high-school-aged students to participate in a hands-on project that provided an enriching educational experience while partnering with the Delta Parks Department to monitor the local water quality. For approximately 10 weeks, Yeager's

students gathered samples from Confluence Lake and irrigation ditches and watched the data change. "This project allowed my students to gain a deeper understanding on how our decisions as humans can and do affect our local waterways, as well as to use scientific methods to learn that water quality is measurable, recordable and sustainable."

"These outstanding examples from the grant program have been added to previous years' projects in an [online book](#)," said Miller. "The Arch Coal Foundation is publicizing the examples not only in Delta County, but to teachers throughout the world so that these innovative ideas may be implemented in their classrooms. Each of these examples has an email link to the teacher embedded in it, so that they may be contacted to obtain more detailed information."

The Arch Coal Foundation provided \$10,000 that supported 24 innovative teaching grants in Delta County for the 2012-2013 school year. Miller noted that applications are being accepted for the 2013-2014 school year -- the seventh year grants have been funded -- with an application deadline of Sept. 27, 2013. Applications are available online at http://www.archcoal.com/community/teachinggrants_application.aspx.

Arch Coal's Mountain Coal Company and its West Elk mine are located in Somerset, Colo. About 350 people are employed at the mine. U.S.-based Arch Coal, Inc. (NYSE:ACI) is one of the world's top coal producers for the global steel and power generation industries, serving five continents. Its network of mining complexes is the most diversified in the United States, spanning every major coal basin in the nation. The company controls more than 5 billion tons of high-quality metallurgical and thermal coal reserves, with access to all major railroads, inland waterways and a growing number of seaborne trade channels. For more information, visit <http://www.archcoal.com/>.