

August 3, 2008

Ford Motor Co. steps up to help Coachella Valley youth

Desert Sun Staff Report

In this weekly feature, The Desert Sun spotlights valley firms performing good deeds.

Ford Motor Co. has stepped up to help local area educators prepare Coachella Valley youth for higher education and the workplace through the Ford PAS program.

\$50,000 grant

Ford Motor Co. announced in June that it will provide a \$50,000 planning grant to the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership to help develop a Ford PAS resource hub in the valley.

The resource hub will provide professional development to area educators and create networking opportunities between the educational and business communities.

The PAS program engages high school students in business, global economics, engineering, alternative energy and math while teaching essential skills needed in today's workforce.

Ford Motor Co. Fund introduced the Ford PAS program to the Coachella Valley in 2007 and 80 teachers from the valley have been trained in Ford PAS to launch the resource hub.

Veronica Nicholas, an architecture and engineering teacher at Cathedral City High School, said, "Ford PAS has brought hands-on learning to my classroom which has increased student engagement enormously.

"With the resource hub, I can keep up with the latest trends and have access to continuous training that will allow my classroom to continue flourishing."

Kim McNulty of CVEP said, "The demand for professional development has increased exponentially since we first introduced Ford PAS into our community.

"Thanks to Ford's support, this grant will help us develop a regional training resource to strengthen and expand the work we do with our business, education and program partners as we help students master the skills they need to succeed through high school, college and career."

Also in June, 200 Coachella Valley teen drivers received hands-on defensive driving training through the Ford Motor Co. Fund's "Driving Skills for Life" program.

The teen driver safety program is designed to improve their skills in hazard recognition, vehicle handling, speed management and space management — all critical factors in more than 60 percent of vehicle crashes.

There are five Ford dealerships in the Coachella Valley and surrounding communities.