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Summer 1996 Newsletter

Issue Number 11

NESEN at NATS 96 to Present on Plate Tectonics and Remote Sensing

The NESEN at NATS 96 workshop will present materials and information on plate tectonics and how to use remote sensing in the classroom. So block out October 24-26, 1996 on your calendars and plan to participate in during the fall meeting of the Nebraska Association of Teachers of Science at Camp Calvin Crest. This conference will feature, among other presentations, the annual NESEN workshop on Thursday, October 24. In addition, the 1st Annual Share-a-thon Extravaganza, featuring activities developed by NESEN summer workshop participants, will held on Friday, October 25. Come share your ideas and activities. If you are interested in participating, use the information on the enclosed form to contact Sue Frack, who is organizing this activity. Contact her at her home address and ignore the deadline on the form. Also on Friday, there will be many topic-oriented sessions, including: Rocks in the classroom, by Dave Gosselin, Nebraska's weather and climate and how to get involved in NESEN's weather-education project, STEDII, by Steve Meyer, Mark Mesarch, and Duane Mohlman, Salt in soil, by Francis Belohlavy, and weather-educational activities by Ed Schafer, sponsored by the American Meteorological Society. The Conservation and Survey Division will also have its booth featuring Nebraska's Earth Science Information Center. If you are planning on attending NATS and giving a presentation, please let us know. We will feature NATS presentations by NESEN members in our next newsletter.

'96 Guide Follows NESEN Homepage, Critical to Members Not Yet Online

Following a different format this year, the third edition of the NESEN Resources Guide and Directory adopts the structure and information of the NESEN homepage, which has become a reality. This is critical since a significant portion of our membership does not yet have access to the Internet. Thus, this hard-copy format is the only way that these members can have access to the earth science information available on our homepage. The 95-page directory continues to grow and improve with each edition. It was published in June and sent to all members. We encourage you to familiarize yourself with the directory. There are many sources of earth science information that you will find useful. (The new guide is also available from the NESEN homepage.)

NESEN Summer Workshop Series Completed

Lessons plans from the NESEN summer workshops may now be acquired for specific topics on a diskette. Workshops provided hands-on training sessions for teachers and provided them

with a lot of material that can be used in their classrooms. Teachers used their new knowledge to develop lesson plans/activities. Through their interactions with the teachers, NESEN instructors increased their knowledge of what might work in the classroom and put them on a computer disk. These lesson plans/activities are also available via the NESEN homepage. Three NESEN summer workshops were held in July and included:

- *Chili Today, Hot Tamale: Let's Look at Nebraska's Weather* - July 8-9. Instructors: Steve Meyer and Mark Mesarch, Agricultural Meteorology. Topics covered included: weather's role in the water cycle, what a weather map provides, observing weather, and a trip to the Omaha/Valley National Weather Service office. Teachers attending included: Lynne Ruth, Carmen Hood, John Niemoth, MaryLou Alfieri, Marianne Bonnemier, Mark Skiles, Becky Kadel, Dave Barnard, Sara LeRoy-Toren, Maureen Vesely and Scott Prickett.
- *Nebraska's Dynamic Water System* - July 10-11. Instructors: Dave Gosselin and Ed Harvey, CSD. Topics included: Nebraska's water cycle, basic groundwater principles and concepts, groundwater and surface water in Nebraska, and field trips to a saline wetland, Lincoln well field along Antelope Creek, and demonstration of equipment used by groundwater scientists. Teachers attending included: Lynne Ruth, Carmen Hood, John Niemoth, MaryLou Alfieri, Mark Skiles, Becky Kadel, Dave Barnard, Sara LeRoy-Toren, Michelle Topf and Jeff Schellpepper.
- *Digging Deeper, But Still Only Scratching the Surface* (soils) - July 15-16. Instructors: Francis Belohlavy and Steve Hartung, CSD. Topics covered included: soil testing, soil chemistry, how to use a soil survey, landscaping, and a field trip examining saline and non-saline soils. Teachers attending included: John Niemoth, MaryLou Alfieri, Mark Skiles, Sara Leroy-Toren and Sue Frack

STEDII Project Hires Additional Summer Help

Sue Frack, who will be switching from Raymond Central to Lincoln Northeast this fall, and Scott Prickett, a senior secondary science pre-service teacher from UNL, were hired for the summer to work on the STEDII (Students and Teachers Exchanging Data, Information and Ideas) Project. Sue and Scott are writing lesson plans and activities designed to be used in conjunction with three two-week focused measurement periods (FMPs). During the FMPs, students will collect weather data and share it with other participating schools while also using it in their classrooms. For more information about STEDII, consult your 1996 Resources Guide and Directory or the NESEN homepage. Interested in participating in STEDII? Contact the NESEN office at 402-472-0773.

Severe Weather Information Kit (SWIK)

SWIK, provided by the Cooperative Extension Service of Nebraska, is intended to both educate and prepare children for severe weather events that can occur in Nebraska, the United States and other parts of the world. The target audience is educators working with children from kindergarten through sixth grade. Not only will children learn how to survive a severe weather event but also what causes severe weather. The severe weather topics are tornadoes, snow storms, flash floods and thunder and lightning storms.

The kit was originally designed as a self-contained portable kit of resources and samples of different kind of printed materials. The kit were distributed to the to Extension Educators in the Cooperative Extension Offices of southeast and south central counties of Nebraska; the regional Cooperative Extension Offices across Nebraska; and the State Cooperative Extension Office. A electronic version is available on the World Wide Web at <http://nesen.unl.edu/webstuff/swik/swikhp.html>. The kit and web pages were designed by Mark A. Mesarch.

The kit contains many educational tools. Several books are included that range from simple experiments to pictorials of weather and severe weather phenomena. Videos topics include preparing to deal with severe weather and why severe weather events occur. The kit also includes single copies of pamphlets, brochures and coloring books that describe severe weather; all of the materials are available from local, state and federal government and relief agencies, free of charge. However, not every agency will have a large quantity, so plan to order from the agency office well in advance. (Some of the literature is also available in Spanish.) A NOAA weather radio is provided. A loose leaf binder contains lessons plans, games, quizzes, experiments and other resources that may be helpful in planning a lesson on preparing for severe weather.

NESEN Membership Breaks 300

During the summer, NESEN membership went over the 300 plateau. Currently, there are 308 members (235 K-12 educators and 73 post-secondary educators). Thanks to all who spread the word about NESEN!

HomePage Update (<http://nesen.unl.edu/nesen.htm>)

Check out the NESEN home page. It is up-dated almost daily and has locations to obtain earth science information. Recently, we added a "Nebraska Geo-trivia" game to the homepage. It lists multiple choice questions on such topics as earthquakes in Nebraska, landslides in Nebraska, mineral facts about Nebraska, and oil in Nebraska. As time permits, other topics will be added.

Newsletter was written by Duane Mohlman, Dave Gosselin and Brian Lang; and edited by Charles Flowerday, Conservation and Survey Division, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.