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High School Teachers Applaud the Chemistry of Fire

Teachers say the Society of Fire Protection Engineers’ Chemistry of Fire Teachers Kit is a New and Unique Teaching Resource that Engages Students

BETHESDA, MD – July 24, 2009 – In 2008, the Society of Fire Protection Engineers (SFPE) partnered with Discovery Education to create a new in-school program entitled The Chemistry of Fire. A copy of this program was distributed to each high school in the United States and throughout New Zealand.

The teachers who have used this program find it to be very informative and a good tool to engage unmotivated students. For example, nearly every teacher (97%) who responded to The Chemistry of Fire’s evaluation survey said the materials provide new or unique teaching resources.

“Understand the program’s effectiveness was critical to its success,” said SFPE Engineering Program Manager Chris Jelenewicz. “Effectiveness was measured through survey cards that were provided in the program kit and a survey that is on the program’s website.”
The Chemistry of Fire teaches high school students the science behind fire as a way for students to fully understand the dangers of fire. Its main purpose is to increase the awareness of fire and the importance of home fire prevention.

The results of the program evaluation also found that 99% of the teachers who responded to the survey said they would incorporate fire safety into their curriculum.

“Each year in the United States more than 3,000 people die and thousands are injured as a result of fire. Our goal was to bring the science of fire into the classroom so students will have a better awareness of the dangers of fire,” said Jelenewicz. “Feedback from the evaluation shows this program is achieving this goal. It is also filling a void in the high school chemistry curriculum because this information isn’t provided in the high school texts.”

Additionally, 99 percent of the teachers said they would encourage their students to enter the fire protection field. Currently, there is a nationwide shortage of fire protection engineers. Their skills are necessary to protect people, property and the environment from the threat of fire. These lessons will help students explore career opportunities in the field of fire protection engineering.

“The Chemistry of Fire Program has also been embraced by the firefighting community,” said Jelenewicz. “Over the past year we received numerous requests from fire chiefs, fire marshals, training officers and public-education officers from fire departments throughout the world who were interested in having this program incorporated into their fire protection programs.”

This interactive program includes a teacher’s guide with five lesson plans, a DVD that demonstrates exciting experiments included in the lessons, a poster and a web site where teachers and students can find more classroom and career resources. To find out more about SFPE or to obtain a free copy of the program go to www.sfpe.org.

What is a Fire Protection Engineer?
A fire protection engineer applies science and engineering principles to protect people, homes, workplaces, the economy and the environment from the devastating effects of fires. Fire protection engineers analyze how buildings are used, how fires start and grow, and how fires affect people and property. They use the latest technologies to design systems to control fires, alert people to danger, and provide means for escape. Fire protection engineers also work closely with other professionals, including engineers of other disciplines, architects, state and local building officials, and local fire departments to build fire safe communities. Fire protection engineers are in high demand. The number of available jobs far exceeds the supply.

About Society of Fire Protection Engineers
Organized in 1950, the Society of Fire Protection Engineers (SFPE) is the professional organization that represents engineers engaged in fire protection worldwide. Through its membership of over 5000 professionals and 67 national and international chapters, SFPE advances the science and practice of fire protection engineering while maintaining a high ethical standard. SFPE and its members serve to make the world a safer place by reducing the burden of unwanted fire through the application of science and technology. To become a member, go to www.sfpe.org.

Advancing the Science and Practice of Fire Protection Engineering Internationally