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**SMU HOSTS 2011 BEAL BANK DALLAS REGIONAL
SCIENCE & ENGINEERING FAIR FEB. 26**

Top students to present science, technology and math projects

Dallas (SMU) — Nine hundred middle and high school science fair winners from across North Texas will gather at Fair Park in Dallas to exhibit their skills at the 2011 Beal Bank Dallas Regional Science & Engineering Fair Feb. 26.

The regional competition is organized by Southern Methodist University in collaboration with public and private schools in Texas Education Area 10. Overseeing the operation is Dr. Simon Dalley, president of the Dallas Regional Science and Engineering Fair and senior lecturer in the Department of Physics at SMU.

Last year's grand prize winner, Plano high school junior Amy Chyao, went on to win the Best-in-Fair award at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair and special recognition from President Barack Obama. Her groundbreaking cancer research competed with more than 3 million science fair projects worldwide.

"We need to teach our kids that it's not just the winner of the Super Bowl who deserves to be celebrated, but the winner of the science fair," urged President Obama in his recent State of the Union address. Ms. Chyao was a guest of honor in the First Lady's box that evening.

"We were delighted with Amy's success last year, but there's much more to it than one outstanding individual," Dalley said. "Based on other students' performances at the state and international science fairs, I'd say Dallas is as strong as any region in the world."

"Our strength comes from our outstanding local supporters. These include our title sponsor, Beal Bank, the school districts, the faculty at SMU and others who judge, and local businesses who donate prizes. Cisco Systems, for example, is offering a new \$1,000 special award this year," Dalley added. "We strive to recognize students and teacher-mentors for their research achievements and motivate them to excel."

A *New York Times* article from Feb. 4, 2011, lamented the decline of participation in science fairs among U.S. students – but Dalley thinks those worries may be premature. “Our area is bucking that trend,” he says, pointing out that the number of students entering the Beal Bank Dallas Regional Science & Engineering Fair has grown by 25 percent in the past four years.

“We’re also getting a greater diversity of students,” Dalley adds. “More school districts and more private schools are coming into the mix.” More than that, he says, more sponsors and donors are lining up to give prizes.

“Our fair is so well organized and so well supported by students, school districts, sponsors and volunteers that the whole North Texas professional and academic community seems to be up for this,” he says.

Potential judges for the Feb. 26 regional fair can register on the fair’s website at www.DallasScienceFair.org the only requirement is that they hold a Bachelor’s degree in the area they wish to judge. A free exhibition of all the projects will be open to the public from 5 to 6:30 p.m., when the results are announced.

WHAT: 54th Beal Bank Dallas Regional Science and Engineering Fair

WHEN: Saturday, February 26, 2011

WHERE: Embarcadero Building at Fair Park in Dallas, Texas

For more information, visit the Fair’s website at www.DallasScienceFair.org or call 214-768-2495.

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