

## WHAT'S INSIDE ...

- More Ivan the Terrible
- Good News
- Statewide Parent Visitation Month
- A Letter from the Teacher of the Year
- TransACT®
- Professional Opportunities

# SCHOOLS GET BACK TO BUSINESS AFTER 'IVAN THE TERRIBLE'

**G**rand Prince Ivan Vassilyevich IV, who would later be known as Ivan the Terrible because of his ruthlessness, was a sinister and arresting figure in the history of the Russian Middle Ages. The end of his rule brought turmoil and chaos, similar to what the recent Hurricane Ivan brought to Alabama.

Extensive damage was felt in the southern region of the state as the strong Category Three hurricane roared ashore in Gulf Shores with 130 mile per hour winds in the early morning hours of Sept. 16. Leaving a path of destruction along the Alabama, Florida, and Mississippi coasts, Ivan continued his northeastern track up Interstate 65 through Montgomery, Birmingham, and into Georgia and the Carolinas. In fact, the mighty Ivan swirled back around into the Gulf of Mexico a week later. Early estimates put damage in the United States at \$5-15 billion.

How did Alabama public schools handle the storm? "Educators are remarkably resilient and Ivan did not destroy their dedication," said **STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION JOE MORTON**. "The plans before, and more importantly, the plans since Ivan to pick up the pieces and continue school are remarkable."

**GOVERNOR BOB RILEY** declared an official state of emergency on Sept. 13 and then ordered evacuations of coastal residents Sept. 14. Morton followed up with correspondence to local superintendents statewide advising them to follow good judgment and safety considerations regarding school closings Sept. 15-17, and beyond if warranted.

What type of relief will battered school systems receive? Consider the many facets this powerful storm lashed out on schools. There was damage to facilities,

**In a Sept. 20 message to local superintendents, State Superintendent of Education Joe Morton wrote,**

**"I know each of you faced unique challenges in dealing with the preparation for and the aftermath of Hurricane Ivan. While most school systems can resume classes today, many of our colleagues in south Alabama still face very serious challenges."**

**On that Monday, 13 of the 130 state school systems reported being closed - affecting approximately 120,000 students.**

utility outages, and devastation throughout many communities and yet, school systems worked feverishly to reopen after Ivan blasted through.

At that point, the state Department of Education assembled a team to assist systems requesting aid, headed by **PERRY TAYLOR**, state school architect. Systems were instructed to assess damages as quickly as possible to enable federal aid requests to be sent to the governor's office. The Federal Coordinating Officer and staff from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the State Emergency Operations Center coordinated the flow of federal assistance. The Presidential disaster declaration approved infrastructure assistance to local governments and individual assistance to storm victims in Baldwin, Mobile, Washington, Escambia, Clarke, Monroe, Conecuh, Butler, Crenshaw, Covington, Coffee, and Geneva Counties. The Presidential disaster declaration approved infrastructure assistance to local governments only in the counties of Choctaw, Marengo, Wilcox, Lowndes, Montgomery, Sumter, Greene, Hale, Perry, Dallas, Autauga, Elmore, Pickens, Tuscaloosa, Bibb, Chilton, Coosa, Jefferson, Shelby, and Talladega. Schools in these 32 counties are eligible for FEMA aid.

As school systems reopened, decisions were made on when to make up lost days due to closings. To receive state funding, state law mandates there must be a minimum of 175 student days and a minimum of 182 days for teachers in the school year. Systems will most likely cut short holiday periods or add days at the end of the school year. However, according to state law, days cannot be made up on Veteran's Day or Memorial

(Continued on page 2)



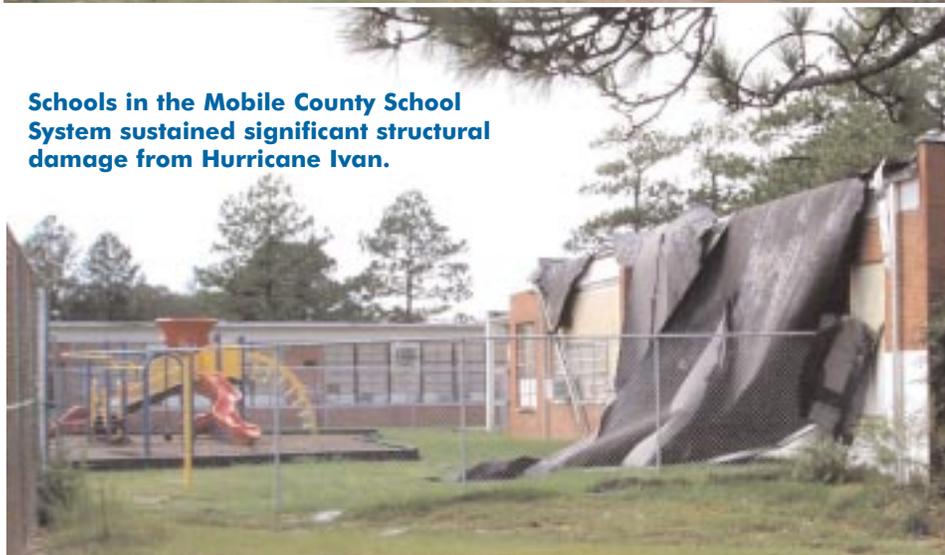
Day. Schools in Baldwin and Mobile Counties will have to make up eight and nine days respectively. Additionally, many systems affected questioned the administration of the *Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE)*, which was scheduled to be given beginning Sept. 20. Morton extended the testing window through Oct. 1 for systems affected. “Should some few systems need even more time, we will work with each system individually in order to assure every student an opportunity to take the exam as conditions permit in his/her school system,” stated Morton. “This is not a time to closely adhere to predetermined deadlines but rather to recognize, appreciate, and reach out to those who

have lived through and survived perhaps the most severe weather-related event ever to hit Alabama.”

Schools in the southern region of the state were among the hardest hit, but worked nonstop to have schools ready for class by Sept. 27. The Alabama Department of Education is proud of the way systems responded with urgency both before and after Ivan, taking appropriate safety precautions but at the same time getting back down to the business of educating Alabama students now that the reign of “Ivan the Terrible Hurricane” is over. 🍏



**Schools in the Mobile County School System sustained significant structural damage from Hurricane Ivan.**



### POSSIBLE CHALLENGES SCHOOLS FACED FOLLOWING HURRICANE IVAN

FACILITIES	UTILITIES	STUDENT OUTAGES	STAFFING ATTENDANCE	INSTRUCTION	STUDENT TRANSPORTATION	CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM
Roof Damage Water Damage Broken Windows Landscaping Furniture Damage Computer Damage Loss of Supplies	Power Telephone Internet Water Sanitation	Homes Destroyed No Electricity in Homes Belongings Destroyed	Devastated Homes Loss of Transportation	Instruction Time Lost Assessment Schedule Loss of Textbooks Loss of Supplies	Impassable Routes Driver Availability Fuel Access	Food Spoilage Product Reordering Product Distribution Equipment Damage



Tags for Alabama vehicles are helping put money in school coffers. In fact, for the Shelby County School System, Helping Schools Tags have provided between \$18,000 and \$20,000 in additional revenue per year for the past three years. The money is used to buy instructional materials and supplies for schools. However **SHELBY COUNTY SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT EVAN MAJOR** knows there is the potential for additional tag revenue collections in his school system, "If every parent of our more than 23,000 students bought at least one of these specialty tags, we could collect more than \$258,000." Statewide, Helping Schools Tags now generate about \$500,000 a year for public schools.

Residents in all Alabama counties can purchase Helping Schools Tags from county Department of Motor Vehicles offices and direct which school system receives 75 percent of the additional \$15 tag fee. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information.  
**State Board of Education Member: Stephanie Bell, District 3**  
**Shelby County Schools Superintendent: Evan Major**



## Alabama Drivers Can Help Schools



Ualeo in Latin means to be able to or to succeed in doing something, which is precisely what some Alexander City Middle School students are accomplishing. They are succeeding in learning the often forgotten language of Latin, thanks in part to language arts teacher **TRACI ROBINSON**. This semester, the course is being offered as an elective to seventh- and eighth-graders and will be offered to fifth- and sixth-graders next semester. Currently, there are 70 students taking the course.

**DR. ANITA BUCKLEY-COMMANDER**, director of Classroom Improvement for the Alabama Department of Education, believes this may be the only elementary or middle school in the state's public school system offering Latin. "This is a somewhat unique course offering because it is actually being taught in the classroom," said Buckley-Commander. "Typically Latin is offered through distance learning courses via the Internet."

School officials hope students learning Latin will utilize the language skills when taking standardized tests, helping them to improve scores.  
**State Board of Education Member: Betty Peters, District 2**  
**Alexander City Schools Superintendent: Tommy Bice**  
**Principal: Tracy McGhee**

## Latin Taught At Alexander City Middle School



Vroom-roar the engines of vehicles coming off the Mercedes-Benz assembly line in Vance, Ala. - vehicles Alabama students have had a hand in manufacturing. The second class of the Mercedes-Benz High School Production Apprenticeship Program has cranked into gear, offering 20 students in 14 West Central Alabama school systems the opportunity to gain hands-on training in automotive production.

The first class of 20 began the inaugural program last school year. Fifteen of those 20 students graduated and are receiving advanced training in preparation for jobs with Mercedes-Benz U.S. International (MBUSI). The program was originally designed for a two- to three-year training period, but the first class exceeded expectations and graduated only after one year.

So, the next time you see a Mercedes-Benz M-Class sport-utility vehicle cruising down the road, it just may have had Alabama students involved in the manufacturing process.

For more information, contact **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR NANCY BEGGS** at 334-242-9111 or [CLICK HERE](#).  
**State Board of Education Member: Sandra Ray, District 7**

## Mercedes-Benz High School Apprenticeship Program



Writer **MARTINE BATES** really has something to celebrate. The Priceville Elementary School principal has recently had her first book published, much to the delight of her students. *Chris Sheats: The Man Who Refused to Secede*, was published by Birmingham's Seacoast Publishing. The biography on Sheats, a Civil War activist from Winston County, is part of Seacoast's *Alabama Roots* series on famous Alabama men and women geared toward readers ages 8-12. Bates is continuing her writing on the Civil War and is in the process of having her second book published. She hopes her students will continue to enjoy reading her accounts involving state history and use them in their daily studies. Copies of Bates' new book can be found in Decatur book stores.

**State Board of Education Member: David Byers, District 6**  
**Morgan County Schools Superintendent: Don Murphy**  
**Principal: Dr. Martine Bates**

Bates reads to 4th grade students from her new book.



## Alabama History





### Congratulations Alabama PTA Schools of Excellence!

Eleven Alabama public schools participated in the National PTA Parent Involvement Schools of Excellence Certification process. The Parent Involvement Schools of Excellence Certification recognizes schools whose parent involvement programs are based on the National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs. As of June 30, 242 schools nationwide were named Schools of Excellence, and 39 received Recognition of Commitment. [CLICK HERE](#) to visit National PTA's Web site or call toll free 1-800-307-4PTA to learn more.

### Alabama PTA Parent Involvement Schools of Excellence are:

#### Mountain Brook City School System

- Brookwood Forest Elementary School
- Cherokee Bend Elementary School
- Crestline Elementary School
- Mountain Brook Elementary School
- Mountain Brook High School
- Mountain Brook Junior High School

#### Gadsden City School System

- Eura Brown Elementary School

#### Madison City School System

- Horizon Elementary School

#### Huntsville City School System

- Monte Sano Elementary School

#### Auburn City School System

- Ogletree Elementary School

#### Mobile County School System

- WP Davidson High School

# OCTOBER IS STATEWIDE PARENT VISITATION MONTH



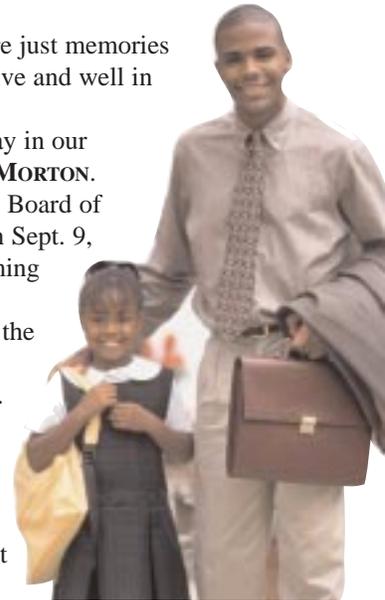
The days of June Cleaver and room mothers are just memories now, but parent and family involvement is alive and well in Alabama public schools.

“Parent involvement is like breathing. We need it every day in our schools,” said **STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION JOE MORTON**. “Because of the importance of parent involvement, the State Board of Education began this special October emphasis in 1999.” On Sept. 9, 2004, the board unanimously approved a resolution proclaiming October as Statewide Parent Visitation Month in Alabama.

“Parent involvement is not limited to a one-time event in the school year, but we do place special emphasis on it during Statewide Parent Visitation Month in October,” said Morton. “Parents have always been vital to children’s success in school and supportive parents certainly contribute to a positive school environment.”

For information about NCLB Parental Involvement requirements, contact Judy Bohannon in Federal Programs at 334-242-8199 or [CLICK HERE](#).

Public awareness materials for Statewide Parent Visitation Month are available online at [CLICK HERE](#). 🍏



## All Aboard *The Polar Express* Reading Challenge!

[CLICK HERE](#) to download materials, including classroom activities and reading tips for parents. In a unique partnership, The National Educator Association’s Read Across America, Warner Brothers Pictures, and the Houghton Mifflin Company invite you and your students to take part in *The Polar Express Reading Challenge*. Kids in struggling schools will receive much-needed books, and get a chance to win a private screening of *The Polar Express* movie as well as signed books and other great prizes.

But don’t miss the train! The *Reading Challenge* ends **October 22**. Start a train reaction ... and help a child read.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information.

[CLICK HERE](#) to view Spanish/English/ bilingual book list.

[CLICK HERE](#) to view Asian-American book list.

[CLICK HERE](#) to view a list of 50 multicultural books every child should know.





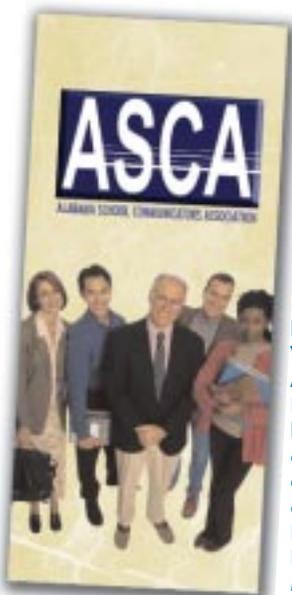
## PARENT "TO-DO" LIST

- ✓ Give positive feedback and show appreciation for teachers and the principal. Approach interactions with a positive attitude and an open mind.
- ✓ Share your child's strengths, talents, interests, expectations, and goals with your child's teachers.
- ✓ Make appointments as needed to discuss your child's progress or concerns. Attend parent-teacher conferences with specific questions to ask.
- ✓ Understand and reinforce school rules and expectations at home.
- ✓ Attend PTA or parent meetings regularly.
- ✓ Read classroom and/or school newsletters.
- ✓ Encourage employers and local businesses to make donations and support school programs
- ✓ Discuss your child's school day and homework daily and develop a consistent daily routine for study time and homework.
- ✓ Vote in local, state, and federal elections for public officials who support education.
- ✓ Be a role model by being active in community service and involve your child.

The Parental Involvement section of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) defines parental involvement as the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, ensuring:

- ♥ Parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning.
- ♥ Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school.
- ♥ Parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child.
- ♥ [CLICK HERE](#) to view other activities, such as those described in *Section 1118* of NCLB.

**CLICK HERE for English or Spanish version.**  
**The U.S. Department of Education Web site also includes a section "Especially for Parents."**  
[CLICK HERE](#) to view.



# FYI

**Plan to attend the Alabama School Communicators**

**Association (ASCA) Annual Conference, Feb. 2-3, 2005, at The Legends Resort and Conference Center in Prattville. One of the keynote speakers will be Tim Hensley, Southeastern Regional Vice President of the National School Public Relations Association. His topic is "Parents are from Mercury and Principals are from Pluto." With numerous studies showing the key to student success is parent involvement in children's education and in local schools, Hensley will share ways to create true parent involvement in our schools and challenge educators to see parents as partners with classroom teachers. For conference information, contact Pat Morrow, ASCA Vice President of Membership, Hoover City Schools, 2810 Metropolitan Way, Hoover, AL 35243.**

# EDUCATION— ONE TEAM, ONE GOAL

By Cynda Fickert, 2004 Alabama Teacher of the Year

**S**tudents, teachers, parents, and administrators begin the new school year with many hopes, dreams, and high expectations. Some students enter school for the first time, and others enter for their final year. Several teachers begin a teaching career, while others are concluding theirs. A number of parents experience the emotion of sending a child to school for the first time, yet other parents prepare for students departing to college. Many administrators begin the year progressing toward achieving Adequate Yearly Progress, and some begin the year focused on enhancing their curricula. All of these participants must have a clear focus of their roles in continuing to improve education.



Teachers have a responsibility to provide standards-based instruction, using a variety of proven strategies. Under the mandates of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB), every classroom is required to have a highly qualified teacher. Highly qualified status is usually achieved by completion of coursework at the postsecondary level or passing a content-area test such as the PRAXIS. Experience also plays a part in the effectiveness of teachers. Unlike other professions, teaching does not have a residency period, and new educators move from being students of teaching to learning how to teach students in one short year, thus magnifying the role of quality mentoring by veteran teachers. Veteran teachers should collaborate with and support new teachers.

Parents are a critical part of this team as well. Under NCLB, schools are required to share test results and teacher qualifications with parents; furthermore, schools receiving Title I funds are required to have a written parent involvement policy. Research shows many positive effects when parents are involved in their children's education. For example, students are more likely to have higher test grades, enroll in higher-level courses, attend school regularly, and go on to the postsecondary education level. Unfortunately, research also shows parental involvement decreases in the upper grades and in high-poverty communities. To encourage parent participation, Alabama education officials have declared October as Statewide Parent Visitation Month. All parents are urged to visit their child's school at least once during the month. This is a tremendous opportunity for parents to see the quality instruction occurring in our schools. Parents who support teachers and schools not only reinforce the value of education with their children, but they also build positive, productive rapport between school officials and the community.

Add quality administrative leadership to the team to create successful schools, which increases morale and achievement. A positive school atmosphere generates teacher retention and community support.

This group of stakeholders will ultimately define the success of Alabama public education throughout the year. Certainly a myriad of other factors influence education, but this is the starting line-up on the field as the "season" begins. If our team is to have a winning season, all of us must share responsibility for educating our children. We may play different roles in the educational process, but we are all on the same team. We all have the same goal: success for Alabama's students. 🍏

*Cynda Fickert is an 8th grade teacher at Auburn Junior High School in the Auburn City School System. Fickert is spending the 2004-2005 school year serving as an ambassador for public education and the teaching profession.*

**THE 2005-06 TEACHER OF THE YEAR APPLICATION DEADLINE IS FEBRUARY 11, 2005.**

[CLICK HERE FOR INFORMATION AND APPLICATIONS.](#)

## BOARD BRIEFS

### SEPTEMBER AGENDA ITEMS:

- ✦ Adopted Amended *Alabama Administrative Code* Rule Pertaining to Regulations Governing Public Schools as Permanent Rule
- ✦ Adopted Amended *Alabama Administrative Code* Rule Pertaining to the Individualized Education Program and Administration as Permanent Rules
- ✦ Adopted Amended *Alabama Administrative Code* Rules Pertaining to Annual Apportionment of the Foundation Program Funds, Transportation Funds, and Public School Fund as Permanent Rules
- ✦ Acknowledged *Allen v. Board of Education*, Second Amended Consent Decree
- ✦ Passed Resolution Commending Tanner High School, Limestone County School System, Agriscience Education Program, as 2003-2004 Outstanding Program of the Year
- ✦ Passed Resolution Commending Lincoln High School, Talladega County School System, Health Science Program, as 2003-2004 Outstanding Program of the Year
- ✦ Passed Resolution Commending Charles Henderson High School, Troy City School System, Business/Marketing Education Program, as 2003-2004 Outstanding Program of the Year
- ✦ Passed Resolution Commending Calhoun County Career Technical Center, Calhoun County School System, Family and Consumer Sciences Education Program, as 2003-2004 Outstanding Program of the Year
- ✦ Passed Resolution Commending Tuscaloosa Center for Technology, Tuscaloosa City School System, Technical Education Program, as 2003-2004 Outstanding Program of the Year;
- ✦ Passed Resolution Commending J. K. Weaver Technical Center, Gadsden City School System, Jobs for Alabama's Graduates (JAG), as 2003-2004 Outstanding Program of the Year
- ✦ Passed Resolution Commending Floyd Middle Magnet School, Montgomery County School System, Career Technologies Education Program, as 2003-2004 Outstanding Program of the Year
- ✦ Passed Resolution Proclaiming October as Statewide Parent Visitation Month in Alabama
- ✦ Passed Resolution Regarding Notification of Truancy Definition
- ✦ Announced Intent to Amend *Alabama Administrative Code* Rule Pertaining to Regulations Governing Public Schools Selected Dr. Ethel Hall Voting Delegate and Betty Peters Alternate Delegate for the National Association of State Boards of Education's Annual Business Meeting



### TransACT<sup>®</sup> HELPS SCHOOLS BRIDGE CULTURAL BOUNDARIES

**I**n today's global society, effective communication requires fluency in translating the English language to many other languages. To better serve the more than 10,000 English Language Learning (ELL) students enrolled in the state's public schools, the Alabama Department of Education is providing school systems the tool to provide parents of ELL students with parent notifications written in their native language.

"TransACT Compliance and

Communication, a software-based collection of multilingual parent notifications, assists schools in breaking the language barrier between staff and parents," **MRS. DELY ROBERTS**, ELL Specialist with the Alabama Department of Education, said. "The TransACT program translates more than 60 General Education school forms, notices, and letters into 22 priority languages."

Additionally, in accordance with the parent communication mandates of *No Child Left Behind*, TransACT supplies more than 47 legal and policy documents

translated in six languages – English, Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

"To comply with *No Child Left Behind*, we are required to provide information to parents in a language the parent understands," said **STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION JOE MORTON**. "This is one tool that allows us to do that."

The majority of Alabama's 130 school systems responded to the new program by sending select school personnel to train on TransACT in a statewide workshop held Aug.30-Sept. 2. Any school systems who have not registered for TransACT should contact Mrs. Dely Roberts at 334-242-8199, 1-888-725-9321, or [CLICK HERE](#). 

#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCES

**The "Get Real About Violence" K-3 Program Training** originally to be held Sept. 16 at the Montgomery Civic Center and Sept. 17 at the Birmingham Jefferson Civic Center was postponed due to Hurricane Ivan. The conference has been rescheduled for Nov. 8 in Birmingham and Nov. 9 in Montgomery. For more information, contact the Alabama Department of Education Prevention and Support Services Section at 334-242-8165.

**The Alabama State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance 2004-2005 Fall Conference** will be held Nov. 14-16 at the Wynfrey Hotel in Birmingham. [CLICK HERE](#) for registration information.

**The Alabama Music Educators Association Conference** will be held Jan. 20-22 at The University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. [CLICK HERE](#) for conference information.

#### AWARD AND GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

**The Target All-Around Scholarships** are awarded based on community volunteer service. Applicants must be high school seniors, high school graduates, or current undergraduate students under the age of 24. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information. **Deadline: Nov. 1**

**The Librarians for the 21st Century Grant Program** supports efforts to recruit and educate the next generation of librarians and the faculty who will prepare them for careers in library science. [CLICK HERE](#) for further information. **Deadline: Dec. 15**

**The Toyota Tapestry Grants for Teachers** are for K-12 science teachers who make science come alive in the classroom. Fifty grants of up to \$10,000 each and a minimum of 20 mini-grants of \$2,500 each will be awarded. [CLICK HERE](#) for registration information. **Deadline: Jan. 19**

**The Toshiba/National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) Exploravision Awards** are open to K-12 students who combine their imaginations with science tools to create and explore a vision of future technology. [CLICK HERE](#) or call 1-800-EXPLOR-9 for competition information. **Deadline: Feb. 1**

