

### DISTRICT EMPLOYEES INVITED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ADULT ED

Are you looking to get in shape? Learn to play guitar or develop new skills? Then take advantage of the full schedule of enrichment classes being offered by Adult Education, now through June 6. Fees for many classes are waived for district employees. Bring proof of employment when registering. For questions about specific courses and fee, call your local adult school  
CVA691-5760 MOA 600-3800  
NCA336-9400 SYA 428-7220

### CHECK OUT THE 12TH ANNUAL SWEETWATER SCIENCE FAIR

You're invited to come and see the outstanding science projects created by Sweetwater students. The 12th Annual District Science Fair will be held Tues. Feb. 3 at National City Middle School from 4-6 pm. An awards ceremony will take place at 6 pm when students will find out who has been selected to continue to the Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair.

### TAKE THE NEXT STEP IN YOUR CAREER

Do you have questions answered about what it takes to obtain your Preliminary Administrative Services Credential or Master's Degree in Education with a specialization in Educational Leadership. Get the answers at an information session on Feb. 5 from 4-5 pm at the District Office, Rooms A-B. Application materials will be provided as well as an explanation of course requirements. To RSVP, email Carmen Curphy at [ccurphy@mail.sdsu.edu](mailto:ccurphy@mail.sdsu.edu) with your name, home address and phone by Monday, Feb. 2. For further information, contact Dr. George Cameron at [gcameron@mail.sdsu.edu](mailto:gcameron@mail.sdsu.edu)

### SWEETWATER GEARING UP FOR ACADEMIC DECATHLON

Sweetwater High will host this year's Countywide Academic Decathlon on Saturday, February 7. The district will be amply represented with nine of the 17 participating schools coming from Sweetwater. This special event required many extra hands. To volunteer, contact Nicole Shina at [NShina@sdcoe.net](mailto:NShina@sdcoe.net) or call (858) 292-3850 at the San Diego County Office of Education.

### 9TH ANNUAL AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENT PARENT CONFERENCE

With an inspiring new role model in the White House, the 9th Annual African-American Student Parent Conference is adopting the theme of achievement: "You Can Do it Too." Set for Feb. 7 at Otay Ranch High, registration begins at 8am. The day offers students in grades 6 to 12, and their parents, resources to help students maximize their potential and an opportunity to connect with community role models. Questions may be directed to Charlene Lemons at [Charlene.lemons@suhsd.k12.ca.us](mailto:Charlene.lemons@suhsd.k12.ca.us) or call (619) 585-7800.

### MATH FIELD DAY

Middle and Junior High school students will have a chance to demonstrate their math skills at the 10th annual Math Field Day. The friendly competition will take place Feb. 28 from 8 am to 12:30 pm at Bonita Vista Middle School. For more information, call the GATE office at (619) 585-7804.

### MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT RATE

If you drive your personal vehicle for district business, take note of the adjusted reimbursement rate. Beginning Jan. 1, 2009, the IRS issued mileage rate is 55 cents per mile.

### REGISTRATION OPEN FOR ROBOROCKS!

Middle Schools students are invited to experience the excitement of creating an entry for the RoboRocks competition. Student teams will receive a PicoCricket kit and software to use in designing and building their robotic invention. Each team must have four students in grades 6-8. At least half the team members must be girls. Teams will be mentored by engineers and technologists. Winning schools will receive awards of up to \$1,000 for school engineering/technology projects. Teachers/counselors interested in fielding a team must register by Feb. 18. The competition will be held Wed., May 6 from 8:30 am – 1 pm. For application and details contact Prof. Truc Ngo at <mailto:tngo@sdccd.edu> or call Pat Centurione, San Diego City College, at (619) 388-3149.

### WIN A LUXURY GOLF OUTING

Get ready to tee off for the 47th Annual Secretaries Dinner. This year's co-host schools, Castle Park Middle and Castle Park High, are fundraising by raffling off a premium day on the links at Four Seasons Resort Aviara Golf Club valued at \$900. Raffle tickets may be purchased for \$5 from school athletic directors or middle school secretaries. The drawing will be held Feb. 27. The school that sells the most tickets wins golf for four at Steele Canyon Golf Course. Call or email Carolina Zimmermann or Gaby Chavez for more details.

### INTERACTIVE SCIENCE CONFERENCE FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS

A panel of San Diego's top scientists and medical specialists are teaming up to lead girls on a voyage of scientific discovery. Young women in grades 6 through 10 are invited to the 2009 Expanding Your Horizons Conference to be held Saturday, Feb. 28 at the University of San Diego. Girls will be assigned to small groups led by two college mentors to attend a keynote session as well as workshops during the daylong conference. A registration fee of \$20 covers lunch and materials. Need scholarships are available. Online registration is available at <http://www.sdsa.org/EYH> the deadline is Feb. 13. For details email [EYH\\_SanDiego@yahoo.com](mailto:EYH_SanDiego@yahoo.com) or call (619) 260-4079.

### RECOGNITION OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE MONTH

Feb. = African-American History Month  
Feb. 2-6 = National School Counseling Week  
Feb. 2 = Groundhog Day  
Feb. 12 = Lincoln's Birthday  
Feb. 14 = Valentine's Day  
Feb. 17 = Random Acts of Kindness Day  
Feb. 22 = George Washington's Birthday

### FEBRUARY

President Holiday (Observed).....13,16  
Board Meeting.....23



## THE CHALLENGE FACING SWEETWATER SCHOOLS

Across our country, our state and our district, these are difficult and uncertain times. As we approach an unprecedented budget crisis, I want to be candid about the situation facing us.

California's deficit is \$42 million and growing. What this means for the Sweetwater Union High School District is \$9 million in immediate mid-year cuts and a potential \$18 million budget shortfall in 2009-2010. That \$18 million is three times more than was cut from our last budget. Never have we faced such an enormous cut in a single budget year. Difficult decisions and painful reductions are ahead.

Because this crisis touches us all, I want to deal with it openly, sharing facts and keeping you informed in a timely fashion. Everyone is welcome to participate in the dialogue, offering solutions and feedback as we work through the budget process.

Employees, parents, students and community members can get the latest information by visiting the district website for frequent updates. You are also welcome to attend meetings of the Budget Development Committee. And, you can email [budget@suhsd.k12.ca.us](mailto:budget@suhsd.k12.ca.us) with your comments and suggestions for budget reductions.

Given the size of the deficit, we know that school services and programs will be affected. But as we approach the hard choices, I have asked management to keep two priorities in mind. First, we must do our best to protect our primary mission of educating our students. Secondly, we will strive to save as many jobs as possible.

Although there are still many unknowns, we are not waiting to take action. Here are our immediate steps:

- Across the district, we have reduced discretionary budgets by 7.5%, generating almost \$1 million in savings.
- To get a clearer picture of district finances, we are accelerating the deadline for inputting requisitions
- Anticipating the state allowing flexibility in the use of categorical funds previously restricted for specific program uses, we are planning to apply any unspent 2007-08 categorical monies to the mid-year cuts, rather than carrying over leftover funds into this fiscal year.
- We are eliminating the district's match for deferred maintenance resulting in a savings of \$2.4 million over two years.

And we are planning our next steps:

- A reorganization of the District Office could save \$1.5 - \$2 million
- An Early Retirement Incentive is being negotiated with employee groups

Finally, we are bracing ourselves for the possibility of layoffs. These will not be easy decisions based solely on seniority. As both our new president and our governor have said recently, we need to pull together during these challenging times. Each of us needs to look beyond ourselves, be flexible and be willing to make sacrifices. President Obama reminded us in his inaugural address, it is "the selflessness of workers who would rather cut their hours than see a friend lose their job which sees us through our darkest hours."

Our district is a large organization, but our strength lies in the combined strength of each individual—teachers, staff, parents, administrators, students and community supporters. Together, we'll get through this and I'll do my best to keep you posted as we continue to prepare for the worst and hope for the best.

Board of Trustees

Jim Cartmill • Bertha J. López • Pearl Quiñones • Arlie N. Ricasa • Greg R. Sandoval  
Dr. Jesus M. Gandara, Superintendent

## KUDOS

**Pearl Quiñones, Board Member**, was re-elected to the California Democratic Party delegates. She was among a selected group of individuals who were in attendance at the Washington, D.C. Inaugural Ball on January 20, 2009 where President Barack Obama and Michelle Obama were present.

**Lee Romero, NCM Principal**, for making the National Center for Urban School Transformation (NCUST) 2009 National Honor Roll. Out of all applicants from across the nation only 43 met all 11 criteria and NCM was one.

**Beethoven Diosa, MOM ASES and Sandra Bishop, CVM ASES**, their students presented to the After School Education and Safety (ASES) staff from San Diego and Imperial Counties at the "AM UP your Middle School After School Program" conference.

**Irene Fombon and Maria Teresa Gonzales, SYA Teacher**, their professional baking class took home the grand prize at the Gingerbread 2008 and the City gala sponsored by the Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego County.

**Cristina R. Barcelo, CPM, Linda Erece, CPM, Ernestina Juarez, SYH, Susana Liston, ROP, Olga Paquian, ELH, John Ray, CVH, Diana Reynoso, BITSA and Blanca Wiltse, ELM**, winners of the Best Doctor's contest from Voluntary Employees Benefits Association (VEBA).

