

MEDIA ADVISORY
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2012

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FLORIDA PANHANDLE'S TOP STEM SCHOLARS TO BE HONORED IN ORLANDO

The Florida Panhandle's highest achieving science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) students will join their peers from around the state Thursday and Friday in Orlando to be honored during the 2012 Sunshine State Scholars program. The two-day awards and recruitment event celebrates the accomplishments of these elite students and provides a unique opportunity for Florida's colleges and universities to recruit their talents.

The Scholars event started as a simple science and math competition in 1997 and has evolved into a program designed to recognize Florida's top high school STEM students and recruit them to pursue their post secondary education in Florida – increasing the likelihood that they will join Florida's future workforce. Each school district selects and names one 11th grade scholar based on established criteria.

The program will begin on Thursday evening with a welcome reception and continues on Friday with a breakfast, recruitment fair and workshops where students can talk with officials representing more than 40 public and private higher education institutions about the opportunities that are available at Florida's colleges and universities. The event concludes with an award luncheon.

The event will take place at

Doubletree Hotel at Entrance to Universal Orlando
5780 Major Blvd.
Orlando

Thursday, Feb. 16
Welcome Reception
6:00 p.m.

Gerard Robinson, Florida Education Commissioner
Frank Brogan, Chancellor, State University System of Florida
Stacy Carlson, Vice President and Director, Helios Education Foundation

Friday, Feb. 17
Breakfast
8:00 a.m.

Jennifer Grove, Workforce Development Coordinator, Gulf Power
Dr. Jimmie L. Davis, Jr., President, *STEMflorida*

Recruitment Fair, Concurrent Exhibits and Workshops
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Awards Luncheon

12:00 p.m.

Roberto Martinez, Vice Chair, Florida State Board of Education

Pam Stewart, Chancellor, K-12 Public Schools

Rosemary Woods, Vice President-Transportation, Atkins

Stephen K. Klasko, M.D., CEO, USF Health, and Dean, Morsani College of Medicine

The Sunshine State Scholars program is a collaborative effort between the Florida Education Foundation, the Division of Florida Colleges, the State University System and the Florida Department of Education. Event sponsors of this year's program include the Helios Education Foundation, Atkins, Universal Orlando Resort, Gulf Power, Florida Trend Magazine, and the Florida Lottery.

A list of the Sunshine State Scholars from Florida's Panhandle is below.

PANHANDLE of FLORIDA		
District	Student	School
Bay	Samantha Nicole Brooks	J.R. Arnold High School
Calhoun	Mitchell Darnell	Blountstown High School
Escambia	Preeyal Gupta	Pensacola High School
Florida State University	Brian Maher	Florida State University School
Franklin	Morgan Walker	Franklin County High School
Gadsden	Tiara Stroman	East Gadsden High School
Gulf	MaKayla Elissa Ramsey	Port St. Joe Jr./Sr. High School
Holmes	Zachary Cooley	Holmes County High School
Jackson	Blake Benton	Marianna High School
Jefferson	Tykeria Jones	Jefferson County Middle/High School
Leon	Diego Hernandez	Rickards High School
Liberty	Jimmy Brown	Liberty County High School
Madison	Keeley Smith	Madison County High School
Okaloosa	Kyle Saleeby	Niceville High School
Santa Rosa	Roman Vena	Pace High School
Taylor	James Clover	Taylor County High School
Wakulla	Jonathan Chunn	Wakulla High School
Walton	Elizabeth Evans	Walton High School
Washington	Alana Hearn	Vernon High School

For more information about the Sunshine State Scholars program, visit www.floridaeducationfoundation.org.

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