

Shelby County students help develop national history test

Most of the 780 eighth-grade students in Shelby County participated this spring in the development of a national middle school American history test for future administration nationwide.

The pilot project is funded through a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant and Boston University. The project is coordinated locally by Sidney resident Dr. Bill Ross, of the American Institute for History Education in Swedesboro, N.J.

Winners from each local school will advance to county finals at 4:30 pm Monday at Sidney Middle School. Dr. Peter Gibbon of Boston University will moderate the event with assistance from Ross, a retired Sidney High School history teacher. Questions are presented in oral, audio and visual formats. The public is invited to attend.

"Over 750 Shelby County eighth-grade American history students participated in the first

round, which consisted of 44 multiple-choice questions on the history of our country to 1877," explained Ross. "The winner of our Shelby County championship at Sidney Middle School will receive \$75 and the runner-up \$25."

Shelby County eighth-grade students took part in the pilot, along with counterparts in suburban Los Angeles and upstate New York. State-level winners

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Local students help with test

(Continued from Page 1) will advance to a national finals competition.

Dr. Peter Gibbon of Boston University, a nationally known history education specialist, was awarded the two-year National Endowment for the Humanities grant to develop a national middle school American history competition. He asked Ross to assist him, and Ross naturally chose his home town as a testing site.

"Peter has worked with me in the U.S. Department of

Education's Teaching American History Grant program and chose me to be his assistant," said Ross. "Other major contributors include Dr. Elliott West of the University of Arkansas and Dr. John Patrick of Indiana University. The group's mission is to develop a competition which the National Endowment for the Humanities can fund and establish in all 50 states."

Ross said Gibbon is coming to Sidney from Boston on Monday to host the final round of Shelby County competition. Ross worked locally with Sidney Middle School Assistant Principal Troy Slattman and Shelby County Educational

Service Center Curriculum Director Ed Leas.

"We have studied other national competitions, piloted questions which reflect state and national standards, and come up with a first-round qualifier consisting of some 44 multiple-choice items which can be scanned," Ross explained. "Preliminary round scores will be returned to respective teachers along with book prizes for top scores. School champions advance to a county competition (regional competition eventually) which features written, visual and audio questions."

Anyone with questions should contact Ross at 498-2247.