

HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE TEACHERS BENEFIT FROM LOCAL PHYSICS ALLIANCES

On 18–19 November, more than 130 college and high school physics teachers will meet in Spencer, Indiana, for the second workshop of the local physics alliances project. The objective of these workshops is to encourage and enable the high school and college teachers to form groups and hold regular meetings, where they can share ideas, discuss problems and keep each other up to date on developments in physics. Such an alliance can help high school physics teachers prepare students for college physics.

The alliances project is the brainchild of the College–High School Interaction Committee, a joint committee of the American Association of Physics Teachers and The American Physical Society. Formally titled "Physics Alliances—A Program for School–College Collaboratives," the project is supported by a \$180 000 grant from the National Science Foundation.

"We either work together or we watch the number of students in our schools who are reached by quality physics teaching continue to decline," wrote co-principal investigators Brian Schwartz, the APS Education Officer, and John Russell of Southeastern Massachusetts University in a letter inviting speakers to the first workshop. The alliances project will continue for approximately two more years in its present form, and by 1990 a total of four or five workshops will have been held across the country. Charlene Reich joined the APS staff a year ago as manager of the project.

Mailing lists of potential participants are obtained from state agencies, AAPT, various directories and any existing physics alliances. Food and lodging are provided at the workshop, and modest travel support is available. So far, teachers at the pre-college and college levels have been attracted to the workshops in equal numbers.

A workshop typically runs from early Friday evening through late Saturday afternoon. Dinner and a



Lester Evans (center, striped tie and glasses), a teacher from Fayette County in Kentucky, speaks with participants at a local alliances workshop held in Raleigh, North Carolina, 29–30 April. Evans has worked as a kind of traveling consultant for physics teachers in Kentucky, in a program he created, "Have Physics—Will Travel."

plenary session on Friday night help generate enthusiasm and provide ample time for initial contact and exchange among the participants. In the morning and afternoon sessions on Saturday, representatives from a variety of existing physics alliances describe the structure and activities of their groups. Workshop participants also meet in smaller prearranged regional groups. They are encouraged to set a date at the workshop for the first meeting of a new alliance.

A distinguished physicist–educator addresses the group during lunch. At the first workshop, held in April in Raleigh, North Carolina, the speaker was APS Vice President Eugen Merzbacher of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. At the Indiana workshop the speaker will be Leon Lederman, director of Fermilab.

Participants in the Raleigh workshop were highly enthusiastic about the gathering. "I feel the support and exchange of ideas with peers is a requirement for growth," said one participant. "Everyone was organized, knew their material and was excited about physics."

No less than eight new alliances were formed at Raleigh. In addition, the Teachers of Physics Society and the Peninsula Physics Symposium, two existing alliances in the Tidewater area of Virginia, decided to combine their newsletters and hold occasional joint meetings. A Raleigh workshop newsletter, edited in the APS New York office, keeps the participants advised of the progress of the alliances that were formed there. APS has been able to provide limited seed money to help the new alliances pay for travel, postage and duplicating costs.

While the number of workshops supported by NSF is limited, APS would like to encourage and assist in the formation of any new physics alliances. The College–High School Interaction Committee newsletter contains national news on alliances and programs for science teachers and students. To receive the CHIC newsletter or further information about alliances and future workshops, write to Charlene Reich, Physics Alliances Project Manager, APS Headquarters, 335 East 45 Street, New York NY 10017. ■