The Oklahoma State Department of Education through the Hydro-Eakly Public Schools sponsored a program called “OK-RMSP: Oklahoma Rural Mathematics and Science Partnership.”. The program, in part, supports a program to increase content knowledge and the creation of standards based mathematics and science lessons for K-12 teachers in rural western Oklahoma. The primary function of the award is K-12 teacher training. Forty teachers have attended a four-week Oklahoma Rural Mathematics and Science Partnership Institute (OK-RMSP) this summer at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford.

In addition to the four-week summer institute that concluded June 25, the teachers will attend six sessions during the fall 2004 and spring 2005 semesters. OK-RMSP is intended to increase content knowledge and the creation of standards based mathematics and science lessons for PreK-12 teachers in rural western Oklahoma.

A focal point for this program was the facilitation of critical skills thinking in the teacher-student interaction and what technology can support such interactions with a minimum training experience. For example in Computer Science digital video was used to present material but in addition the attendees were trained in how to use the combination of instructor generated media with student generated media and how to use such media to facilitate learning. The idea was to get the teachers to understand that media is more than just a presentation tool. Microsoft Power Point is commonly used by instructors to present lecture material. In the partnership, participants were encouraged to treat Power Point as a study tool. Instead of just using Power Point, the capability was explored to allow students to annotate an instructor outline by adding note pages, add video annotations, voice annotations etc.

School districts that are represented include: Boise City, Butler, Clinton, Covington-Douglas, Dover, Elk City, El Reno, Fletcher, Gage, Geary, Grandfield, Hinton, Hydro-Eakly, Indiahoma, Maple (Calumet), Taloga, Thomas-Fay-Custer, Watonga, and Weatherford.

The Institute serves to alleviate the relative isolation of teachers in rural Oklahoma classrooms and provide rich supplemental learning experiences in areas where formal and informal resources are sparse. The combination of University and PreK-12 teaching faculty will connect current mathematics and science content and research with practical classroom applications and teaching standards.

“The goal to encourage higher standards and expectations in participating schools, increase the teachers’ content knowledge, and deliver our results beyond the borders of Oklahoma. Additional advanced topics include computer security and a spin-off of the computer security resulted in meeting with parents at several schools about keeping their home computer safe.

The objectives of OK-RMSP come from the Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS, 1995) as well as the Principles and Standards for School Mathematics (PSSM) from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM, 1995) and the National
Science Education Standards (NSES) from the National Research Council (NRC, 1996). OK-RMSP is also in alignment with the goals and objectives set by Oklahoma Teacher Education Consortium.