

Press Release

Engineers for America receives **STEM***florida* award recognition

Engineers for America recently received **STEM***florida* award recognition for Improved Student Outcomes.

STEM*florida* is a collaborative partnership funded by Workforce Florida to address STEM talent development for Florida's future. **STEM***florida* recognized 22 businesses, organizations and education initiatives from across Florida for excellence in STEM—science, technology, engineering and math—education and training delivery programs. The awards were presented at the 2010 **STEM***florida* Business & Education Conference held recently in Orlando. The awards highlighted Florida's outstanding "best of the best" STEM programs that produce outcomes that meet workforce needs and that can be replicated around the state.

Engineers for America (EFA) is a joint Okaloosa County School District and Air Force Armament Museum Foundation educational program in its fourth year of operation. The program brings elementary and middle school students to the museum. The students are first given a tour of the museum's exhibits which serve as examples of STEM challenges faced by engineers in their time. The students then conduct formal experiments, called "sorties" (*using the scientific method*) that are based on *Florida Department of Education Next Generation Sunshine State Standards*. These sorties afford great opportunities for students to master the grade-level benchmarks that will be assessed on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test. The program is designed to motivate more students into technical careers to meet the critical shortage of engineers, scientists, mathematicians the country faces in the future. *A concurrent goal of the program is conduct teacher workshops to provide teachers STEM strategies and materials for use in their daily classroom activities. EFA relies on grants from the Boeing Company, the National Defense Industrial Association, the National Defense Education Program and other sponsors to provide the teacher workshop, materials and student activities free of charge for teachers and students.*

The foundation continues to fundraise to construct a state of the art education center immediately adjacent to the current museum at 100 Museum Drive, Eglin AFB, FL. The new center will better accommodate EFA as it continues to grow each year. *Since its inception, almost 3000 students will have participated in the EFA Initiative through the end of this calendar year.* For more information on EFA and the foundation's capital improvement initiative go to www.afarmamentmuseum.com.

Mr. Rick Soria, Assistant Principal, Choctawhatchee High School, received the award in Orlando in July. Mr. Soria is co director of the EFA Program along with Paul Maryeski, the foundation's Executive Director.



A group of Mary Esther students measures out the distances between the planets. Each meter represents an astronomical unit, i.e. the distance from the sun to Earth, or about 93 million miles.



One of the favorite "sorties" is Foxtrot "Make It the Tallest." Students have 66 pieces of a Tinker toy set and a limited amount of time to see who can build the highest free-standing structure.