

CHS will host two-day science, engineering festival in October

By Tony Gicas
Staff Writer

CLIFTON – A City school trustee is spearheading an extensive two-day science and technology festival slated for this fall.

Commissioner Michael Paitchell, the founder and executive director of the New Jersey Applied Science and Technology Council, is organizing the New Jersey Science and Engineering festival scheduled for Oct. 23 and Oct. 24.

"The U.S.A. has a crisis brewing," Paitchell said. "We have to get more young people interested in science and technology, choosing technical careers, and becoming entrepreneurs if we are to continue to function and grow as a viable country and have jobs for our children as well as ourselves...I decided that hosting a satellite event would be the perfect way to expose people of all ages to state of the art science and real world applications, show national unity, and start steering the country back on course."

The festival will serve as a satellite event in conjunction with the national undertaking to be held on the National Mall in Washington D.C.

Paitchell said the festival is not a run-of-the-mill 'Science Fair' geared toward highly technical research projects which might bore the average American.

"It is designed to be exciting, fun, inspirational and educational to people of all ages, including students from elementary school



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through college and graduate programs," he said.

The festival, which Paitchell said could be best characterized as a "World's Fair" of science and technology, will include lectures, live music, theater, film and other forms of live science entertainment.

Anticipated to appear are several of the state's Nobel Laureates, leading scientists, industrial and educational leaders as well as a possible appearance by an experienced astronaut, Paitchell said.

Exhibitors from major industries such as biotechnology, life science, high technology, robotics, electronic automation, aeronautics, and defense are expected as well as representation from several universities, museums, institutes, government agencies, science centers and professional societies.

In addition to "virtually all" of Clifton High School and its surrounding athletic fields, Paitchell said the event has also reserved half of the Essex County Airport in Caldwell for an extensive aerospace and aircraft exhibit.

He said there are plans for free shuttle buses which will run between CHS and the airport during the Oct. 23 weekend.

In addition, shuttles will circulate throughout Clifton between

designated parking areas and the high school.

Paitchell said the festival will be held "completely free to the public" and will be entirely funded by corporate and private donations. There will, however, be a need for volunteers.

Larry Bock, the founder of the U.S.A. Science and Engineering festival and a personal friend of Paitchell's, is organizing the national festival to be held in the nation's capital. Bock was responsible for the unprecedented success of last year's Inaugural San Diego Science Festival which drew more than 200,000 people; purported to be the largest one-day science gathering ever in the United States.

Paitchell said he hopes to emulate the success seen in San Diego and said he is expecting approximately 10,000-15,000 people for the Clifton satellite event.

"It's going to be big," he said. "I had originally planned to do a small regional science fair last year but I became acquainted with Mr. Bock and he suggested that I do a satellite festival. This is a massive undertaking...but in the end this will be a huge success."

According to the U.S.A. Science and Engineering festival Web site, the organizing of satellite festivals are underway in Connecticut, Arizona, Washington, Illinois, California, Ohio, North Carolina and New York but will also take place in foreign cities like Buenos Aires, Argentina and Pondicherry, India.

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