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### DELCO HI-Q SEASON BEGINS WITH ANNUAL PRACTICE SESSION

The 62<sup>nd</sup> season of Delco Hi-Q got under way Nov. 10 with an all-day practice session at Springfield High School. More than 200 students from 21 Delaware County high schools who are taking part in the nation's oldest academic quiz competition for high school scholars got a preview of the competition that starts next month.

New players got familiar with the format, the pace of the contests and the buzzer system. Each team tackled questions from last year's contests posed by professional actor/announcer Tom McCarthy, Hi-Q quizmaster since 1979 and a member of the Delco Hall of Honor. They also got valuable tips on how to put points on the scoreboard.

Penncrest will be defending its 2008-2009 championship when the competition begins Dec. 1, with teams from Ridley and Sun Valley meeting at Chichester. Weekly contests will continue through Feb. 5, 2010, when Upper Darby hosts Chichester and Marple Newtown to wrap up the regular season.

Semifinals are Feb. 16 and 18, and the 2009-2010 championship match is set for March 2. Teams will be vying for first, second and third place cash awards of \$3,000, \$2,500 and \$2,000, respectively, for their schools. The championship team also gets to display the Donna Zerby Trophy at its school for the year.

Engraved plaques are awarded to each participating school and every team member receives a certificate.

The three top teams, along with all participating teams, will be honored at the annual Partners in Learning Celebration on April 29 at the Drexelbrook Corporate Events Center in Drexel Hill.

Major sponsor of the dinner event is Franklin Mint Federal Credit Union Foundation, Inc., the primary corporate sponsor of Delco Hi-Q for the fifth consecutive year. The Foundation is dedicated to promoting education and charitable causes in communities served by the credit union.

Along with FMFCU, the quiz competition is presented by the Delaware County Intermediate Unit. Technical assistance is provided by the IU's Dave Bramble. Hi-Q valedictorian sponsor is Kimberly-Clark Corp, Chester Operations. Support also comes from the *Delaware County Daily Times*.

Returning for his fourth year as Delco Hi-Q director is Richard "Rick" Durante, FMFCU Vice President of Education. Hi-Q Coordinator is Wes Crane, FMFCU Senior Education Specialist, while Michelle Skrobak, FMFCU Youth Education Specialist, serves as assistant.

Durante thanked this year's sponsors, as well as Wawa, Chick fil A and FMFCU for providing lunch for the students.

"Enjoy the day and the season," he told them. "We know Hi-Q is a lot of hard work, but we hope it will be a lot of fun for you."

Competing for the first time, Garnet Valley senior Kevin Day of Bethel said he wasn't sure what to expect when he sat down on stage with his teammates to face teams from Academy Park and Upper Darby.

"But it was fun," he said when the first round of practice questions was over.

The upcoming Delco Hi-Q season marks the 30<sup>th</sup> for Penncrest team advisor Michael Ludwig.

"I'm as excited as I was in 1979 for my first season," he said. "I have the same caliber of scholars to work with this season as I had in my first."

Penncrest co-captains Katie Ferguson and Jennifer Walker, both seniors, expressed confidence in their team's abilities.

Ludwig noted each of Walker's brothers, Joe and Jeffrey, were Penncrest team captains during their student days.

"It's a family dynasty," he added with a smile.