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MathScience Innovation Center Receives \$200,000 Gift from Altria For Technology Teaching Program

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The MathScience Innovation Center announced a two-year pledge of \$200,000 from Altria Group to support the *21st Century Nanotechnology Fellows Program*. Dr. Julia Cothron, Executive Director, announced the grant at a recent meeting of the MathScience Innovation Center's Board of Directors. The *Nanotechnology Fellows Program* is a capacity-building workforce program for K-12 educators. Through the program and a pair of associated conferences, the Center will expand math and science teachers' opportunities to learn about the emerging field of nanotechnology and effective ways to integrate it within the curriculum.

Brian K. Wells, Manager of Production for Philip Morris USA, an Altria company, serves on the board of directors for the MathScience Innovation Center Foundation. Mr. Wells noted, "As leading employers based in central Virginia, Altria is committed to helping spark students' interest in the study of math and science, which are the basis of so many career disciplines. We commend the MathScience Innovation Center for focusing on teacher training in order to raise the level of local math and science instruction and contribute to Central Virginia's competitiveness in the global marketplace."

Formed in 1966 as the Mathematics & Science Center, the MathScience Innovation Center is one of the oldest examples of regional partnerships in the metro Richmond area. The Center is comprised of eight school divisions: Chesterfield, Colonial Heights, Hanover, Henrico, King William, Petersburg, Powhatan, and Richmond. Going into the 2008-2009 academic year, the consortium's 139 elementary, 46 middle and 36 high schools represent a range of urban, suburban, and rural schools.

Very aware of the need to include 21st century concepts in the curriculum, the MathScience Innovation Center Board refocused the Center's mission on being the innovator, incubator and advocate of 21st century math and science programs for the Capital region's K-12 educators and students. To begin, the MathScience Innovation Center identified two major areas that are currently not included in the state math and science standards: Fractal Geometry and Nanotechnology. Because of the shortage of engineers, the Center also implemented a program to increase middle school educators' knowledge.

The MathScience Innovation Center is proud to be the leader of K-12 math and science education for the eight Central Virginia school divisions within our 42-year-old consortium. Annually, about 150,000 students learn through specially designed classrooms at the Center, lessons taught on-site within area K-12 classrooms, and a series of Saturday and summer courses. More than 3,000 educators improve their ability to teach math and science through workshops within area school divisions, short courses for certificate renewal, and graduate courses taught in collaboration with Virginia institutes of higher education. Virtual programming includes websites, web-based courses, streaming videos, and videoconferencing, with about 1,000,000 visitors accessing these services annually.

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