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CAPITAL CITY FRONT PAGE NEWS

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Angoon students get chance to learn about space exploration

Students in Angoon will have the opportunity to become virtual space explorers after the Angoon school has become one of a number of Alaska schools to participate in the Space Explorers, Inc. program

The Alaska Aerospace Development Corporation (AADC) is the co-sponsor of the school-based educational grant program in over 50 Alaska schools. Through AADC's co-sponsorship, the Space Explorers Portal program provides, free of charge, the educational curriculum and program support needed for Alaska schools to bring space exploration into the classroom.

Apart from Angoon, schools from Anchorage, Fairbanks, Kodiak, New Stuyahok, Elim, Naknek, among others, will participate in this program at no cost to their school.

The Portal program includes lesson plans, mission simulations, plant experiments, on-line chats with astronauts and scientists, current events in the space community, classroom contests and take-home activities. It provides on-line, interactive, and hands-on earth, space, life, and physical sciences topics that teach students the fundamentals of space research and exploration.

Jason Daniels, a teacher at K-Beach Elementary School in Soldotna said, "With this program kids get to run real missions from launch to landing. Whether or not the mission is a success is up to the kids. The most anticipated part of the on-line Mars mission we do is each kid gets to drive the Mars rover and collect samples and analyze data. They line up for that."

He added, "But the best feature is the on-line chats once a month. The Space Explorer's program lines up a real expert and kids all over the U.S. can log on for free and talk via a chat room with real people involved in these fields. We've talked to an expert on the current Titan satellite mission and an investigator from the Challenger disaster who answered six of our questions. Kids are talking to real life people! I'm really grateful for this opportunity. When kids know it's not real, it's a real downer. But when it's real there is much more on-task learning."

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Jodi Doster, Earth Sciences teacher at Bristol Bay Middle/High School in Naknek said, "I will use it to enhance my curriculum with the variety of materials it provides. Also, we are encouraging students to use technology and are looking to this program for tools to do that."

Pat Ladner, President and CEO of AADC, said, " We are very happy to provide this opportunity to students and teachers across the state. It is part of the mission of AADC to promote technological infrastructure in the state of Alaska and we consider education to be a key component of that mission."

The Alaska Aerospace Development Corporation owns and operates the Kodiak Launch Complex, in Kodiak, Alaska, and serves the commercial aerospace industry. Its mission is to provide space launch services, to foster new space-related industries in Alaska, and to stimulate interest in space careers and technology amongst Alaska's young people.

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