

# DECA STATE/PROVINCIAL ONLINE NEWS COMPETITION 2005–2006 PROJECT GUIDELINES

## OBJECTIVE

The DECA State/Provincial Online News Competition encourages officers to keep their members informed of and involved in association activities. Participants will be judged on both the design of the state/province's online news page and the effectiveness of its contents.

## DESCRIPTION

The DECA State/Provincial Online News Competition is an annual competition that rewards the states or provinces that do the best job of keeping DECA members informed. Some of the judging criteria are: Does the state or provincial Web site keep members up to date on DECA activities? Does it encourage involvement? Is the writing appropriate for the audience? Is the news offered in a reader-friendly format?

- All DECA state/provincial associations that have a Web site where they post articles about DECA are eligible to compete.
- The articles must be the work of the team entering the competition. (Outside writers may contribute articles to the Web site if the team serves as editors.)
- Judges will consider the design of the Web site news page or pages as a whole, and will read one month's worth of articles in depth to judge grammar and writing style.
- The articles must have been published between August 1, 2005, and the competition deadline of March 1, 2006.
- Five winners will be selected—one from each region and one grand winner.
- The winners will be announced at the International Career Development Conference (ICDC) in May 2006.

\* Winners do not have to attend ICDC to participate. Eligibility to attend ICDC is determined by the state/provincial associations. There is no central Web site hosting the competition. States and provinces may place their articles online anywhere; simply indicate the URL or URLs on the Final Entry Form. *It is the responsibility of the entrants to verify that the URLs are accurate. Entries with incorrect URLs will be disqualified from the competition.*

## ELIGIBILITY

- Only high school members of DECA Inc. (national DECA) are eligible. All individuals on each entry team must have current year's dues on file at DECA Headquarters in Reston, Virginia, prior to submitting an entry.
- The entry **must** include a complete Entry Form and Statement of Assurances. (There is only one entry form this year; the preliminary Entry Request Form that was used last year has been eliminated.)
- Entries **must** meet all guidelines set forth.
- The entry **must** be approved by the state/provincial advisor.
- Changes **may** be made to the Web site after the Entry Form is submitted to DECA in Reston, but each judge will only evaluate the site once. Judges will not go back and re-evaluate a site after changes have been made; whatever's online when the judges are ready is what will be judged.

## WHAT IS AN ONLINE NEWS PAGE?

There are very few restrictions on format. Both newsletters (PDF, Word or other documents placed online) and articles integrated directly into a Web site are eligible. It is up to the judges to decide whether a particular format is effective

and easy to use. If you have any questions about the competition, contact Traci Molnar in DECA's High School Division: (703) 860-5000.

Here are a few guidelines to keep in mind:

- Online news may or may not resemble a traditional print newsletter.
- All the articles to be judged need not be placed online at the same time. Some officer teams prefer to add articles over the course of a month to encourage frequent return visits—a valid strategy for a Web page.
- The judges must have a way to determine what constitutes one month's worth of articles. Some examples of ways to do this are as follows: placing each month's articles online as a separate PDF or Word document; giving each month a distinct URL; listing articles by month of publication; or dating each article individually.

## **PARTICIPANT'S INSTRUCTIONS**

These guidelines are your instructions. Read them carefully, *including* the Judging Criteria, and review the Rating Sheet to learn how to enter and how entries will be scored. When you are ready to enter, fill out the enclosed **Entry Form and Statement of Assurances** and submit it to DECA, Attn: Online News Competition, 1908 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 20191.

## **GUIDELINES & SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

**1.** This is a team project. Any state/provincial officer team may submit an entry. The Entry Form and Statement of Assurances must be submitted to DECA no later than midnight (Eastern Standard Time) March 1, 2006. Winners will be announced at the International Career and Development Conference.

**2.** Incomplete entries or entries that do not meet the competition's guidelines will be automatically disqualified. If you notice an error

or omission in your Entry Form and Statement of Assurances, you must submit the corrected form in by the competition deadline, March 1, to be eligible for judging.

**3.** Entries must meet the following qualifications.

- Articles to be judged must have been published between August 1, 2005, and March 1, 2006.
- The online news page or pages must be the work of the entry team. Articles may come from a variety of sources, including non-DECA members, as long as the entry team is functioning as editors for those articles.
- The state/provincial advisor must approve the entry's admission into the competition.
- Web sites must open successfully in Netscape 4.0 or Internet Explorer 4.0 or higher.
- Each site entered must clearly indicate which state/provincial association publishes it.
- The site must promote awareness of DECA and involvement in DECA activities.
- Special effects such as animation, audio and video are permitted but not required.
- The entry must not violate any copyrights.

**4.** Each member of the officer team is responsible for having read all the guidelines. DECA is not responsible for an entry that is late, lost, misdirected, corrupted or not received.

All inquiries should be made to Traci Molnar in the DECA High School Division. Call (703) 860-5000, extension 222, or e-mail [traci\\_molnar@deca.org](mailto:traci_molnar@deca.org) with "online newsletter" in the subject line.

**5.** DECA has the right to use any or all of the project submitted. DECA may use all submitted information as a part of the promotion and/or execution of the competition.

## **JUDGING CRITERIA**

**1.** Each project will be evaluated using the Rating Sheet provided to the judges. (See enclosed sample.)

**2.** In the first round of judging, each entry will be judged against others from the same region.

**3.** The top two entries in each region will move to the final round of competition. From this group, one overall winner and four regional winners will be selected.

**4.** The decision of the judges will be final.

**5.** Any entry that does not include the completed Entry Form and Statement of Assurances will be automatically disqualified. Any entry that cannot be found at the URL(s) indicated on the Entry Form will be automatically disqualified.

**IMPORTANT!**

**ENTRIES THAT VIOLATE COPYRIGHT LAWS ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE.  
IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH OFFICER TEAM TO ENSURE  
THAT ITS ARTICLES**

# DECA State/Provincial Online News Competition ENTRY FORM & STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES

Complete this Entry Form and Statement of Assurances and fax or mail it to national DECA. The form must be completed in its entirety and received by March 1, 2006. The competition judges will use this form to locate and evaluate your online news page.

State or Province of Entry \_\_\_\_\_

**Team Members/Schools** (*List the individuals responsible for producing the newsletter and indicate what schools they attend. You may use a separate piece of paper for this list.*)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Newsletter Entries

*Indicate the URL or URLs where your DECA news can be found on the Internet. **Please verify that the URLs are correct before submitting the entry. Entries with incorrect URLs will not be judged.***

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## State/Provincial Advisor

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Our state/provincial advisor has reviewed and approved this entry:  Yes  No

## Statement of Assurances

The contents of this entry are the result of this team's work. The Web site to be judged were produced during the 2005–06 school year. The entry does not violate any copyrights and meets the guidelines set forth by DECA Inc. for this competition.

State/Provincial Advisor's Signature

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Newsletter Editor's Signature

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

FAX this form to (703) 860-4013 or MAIL it to

Attn: Online Newsletter Competition, DECA Inc., 1908 Association Drive, Reston, VA 20191

**The form must be received by March 1, 2006.**

# DECA State/Provincial Online News Competition

## JUDGES' INSTRUCTION SHEET

Judges, please review this instruction sheet before viewing the news competition entries.

### **Purpose of the Competition**

The DECA State/Provincial Online News Competition encourages DECA state/provincial officers to keep their members informed of and involved in association activities. Participants will be judged on both the design of the Web site where DECA news is posted and the effectiveness of the site's contents.

Following are a few things to keep in mind as you rate each entry.

**1.** You may see a variety of formats in this competition. Both online newsletters (such as PDFs or Word documents placed online) and online news sites (a Web page or pages where DECA news is available) are allowed in the competition. *What matters most is not the format but how easy that format is for online readers to access and use.* Ease of use is part of what you will be judging.

**2.** Before the judging begins, DECA staff will review each entry to make sure it meets all competition guidelines and it is accessible from Internet Explorer or Netscape. If you have any problem accessing the Web sites, contact DECA immediately so we can verify that we gave you the correct URL.

**3.** The rating sheet lists 16 statements that describe what a well-done online news operation should be like. Read each statement and decide whether it describes the entry you are judging. If you strongly agree that it describes the entry, award a score of 5 for that statement. If you strongly disagree, award a score of 1. If you think it's 50/50, award a "neutral" score. For example, the first statement is "Fonts are clearly readable." If half of the fonts used are clearly readable and the other half are not, score it a 3. The "agree" (4) and "disagree" (2) ratings are for the in-between cases where you cannot completely agree or disagree with the statement.

**4.** For most of the statements, you will rate the entire news page or pages. For questions 10 through 14, select one month's worth of articles to focus on. Which month you select is entirely up to you—the teams that have entered the competition must be prepared for you to review *any* article on the Web site.

**5.** Read enough of each article you selected to get a sense of how well each issue is written and edited. You do not need to read every word of every article.

**6.** Keep in mind that the articles are aimed primarily at high school students, so the use of slang or an informal writing style may be appropriate. Teachers and school administrators will also be part of the audience, however, and should not be offended by the writing or the graphics.

**7.** When you are finished, fax the rating sheets to DECA at (703)860-4013. You do not need to total up the points; DECA can do that for you.

*Call Traci with DECA at (703)860-5000 or e-mail [traci\\_molnar@deca.org](mailto:traci_molnar@deca.org) if you have any questions. We appreciate your help with this competition!*

\*\*\*SAMPLE JUDGES' SHEET\*\*\*

(Read this to get an idea of what the judges will be looking for.)

# DECA State/Provincial Online News Competition RATING SHEET

Judges, contact Traci with DECA at (703) 860-5000 or [traci\\_molnar@deca.org](mailto:traci_molnar@deca.org) if you have any questions. For some questions you will evaluate the entire news page (or pages); for others, you will consider one month's worth of articles. Please indicate below which month you selected.

Judge's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Entry (State or Province): \_\_\_\_\_

Rate the entry according to the following scale.				
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

	Score
<i>Overall Appearance (evaluate the entire news page or pages)</i>	
1. Fonts are clearly readable	
2. Graphics and illustrations are appropriate and attractive	
3. Shows originality and creativity	
<i>Identification (evaluate the entire news page or pages)</i>	
4. Clearly identifies the state or province publishing the Web page or pages	
5. Promotes awareness of DECA	
6. Consistency of design gives articles a single identifiable "look"	
<i>Layout/Ease of Use (evaluate the entire news page or pages)</i>	
7. Text is appropriately placed	
8. Links (if any) work	
9. Pages load quickly	
<i>Content—Effectiveness (evaluate one month of articles)</i>	
Month evaluated: _____	
10. Covers a variety of topics	
11. Articles are original and likely to be of interest to high school students	
12. Headlines draw readers in	
13. Writing is free of bias (gender, ethnic, religious, etc.)	
<i>Content—Style and Grammar (evaluate one month of articles for questions #14 and 15; entire news page or pages for #16)</i>	
Month evaluated: _____	
14. Exhibits proper grammar, spelling and word usage	
15. Writing suits the audience, in tone and in style	
16. Shows editorial control with consistency between months	
<b>TOTAL SCORE FOR ENTRY:</b>	