

For Immediate Release
February 17, 2006

For More Information, Contact
Eileen D. Cassidy
(703) 264-7200
E-mail: ecassidy@npes.org

GAERF 2006 GRANTS SUPPORT INDUSTRY OUTREACH TO BROADER AUDIENCES

A new program designed to deliver graphic communications career information to deaf and hard-of-hearing students is among the recipients of more than \$160,000 in new grants announced recently by the Graphic Arts Education and Research Foundation (GAERF®).

The 2006 grant program will fund projects that span all levels of the educational community, bringing the total funding distributed by the foundation since its inception to over \$4.6 million.

“The diversity of the programs being funded by GAERF is a strong message in and of itself,” says GAERF Chairman Randolph W. Camp, CEO of Walton Media Services in Monroe, Georgia. “Our industry is marshalling an extraordinary amount of talent and energy to promote career commitments and improve skills at every level, and GAERF is making a major contribution to this effort.”

The program serving deaf students is being implemented by the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), which describes itself as “the world’s first and largest technological college for deaf and hard of hearing students.” GAERF’s grant supports the first year of a planned three-year effort. This inaugural year will focus on development of an interactive web site that will give students easy access to knowledge about careers in graphic communications, an online inventory of career materials, interactive and individual online advising, information about accessible post-secondary technical education programs, and other resources.

This audience “tends to get lost in the cracks in terms of having access to

meaningful information about graphic communications,” says RIT faculty member Thomas Raco, who is directing the program. Raco notes that web site design for deaf and hard of hearing students must take into account their career maturity level and language capabilities.

In the program’s first year, Raco says considerable effort will be devoted to developing the functionality of the web site as well as identifying -- and sometimes modifying -- other sites that may be appropriate links. “We hope to have a prototype site available by the end of 2006,” Raco says.

In addition to the NTID program, GAERF announced a new grant for the PrintForce effort administered by The Printing Industry of the Carolinas, Inc. (PICA).

PrintForce is a workforce development program that promotes PrintED certification of high school and two-year college programs, career awareness, continuing education and teacher development. With the GAERF grant, project manager Terrie Duncan says, “We hope to increase the number of career awareness events in those parts of North and South Carolina where our organization has never had the opportunity to have a presence.”

“In the past we have had to focus on the major metropolitan areas, but now we can also visit smaller communities,” she says. “PrintForce will continue to work with the high school community, but will increase its outreach by targeting middle school students as well.”

The International Printing Museum in Carson, California, is another grant recipient. The museum will use its new GAERF funds to support development of a *Graphic Arts Tour* and *Mobile Graphic Arts Lab* designed to attract and inspire high school students to explore careers in the printing industry.

Museum Executive Director Mark L. Barbour points out that the museum has a long-standing commitment to bring graphic arts experiences and career information to students in lower grades and to those in high school.

In a typical year, Barbour says, museum presentations visit about 275 schools and together with programs staged at the museum, they reach nearly 30,000 students.

GAERF’s funding provides “seed money,” Barbour said, to “develop curriculum-specific programs primarily targeted at high school students. Our input from successful

teachers indicates they prefer an interdisciplinary approach that links our presentation with subjects in history, social studies, and science.”

One goal of this new program, Barbour adds, is to help teachers “demonstrate that they are meeting the appropriate standards.”

Finally, GAERF announced significant continuing funding to Virginia Polytechnic and State University for management of its popular and growing GRAPHIC COMM CENTRAL web portal, a site that the foundation has supported since 1997.

Project Director Mark Sanders says GRAPHIC COMM CENTRAL has been enhanced in several ways recently. Eight new “virtual tours” have been added to illustrate aspects of the design and production process, and a new “forums” section provides access to more than twenty online discussion groups.

“We’ve added a new *State Curricula* section that provides access to State Curriculum Guides and other curriculum materials, including access to twenty-two Graphic Communications/Communication Technology Curriculum Guides,” Sanders adds. “Plus, we have new links to all of the existing state-level technology education and career and technical education web sites. Many graphic communication teachers will find those links helpful.”

The Graphic Arts Education and Research Foundation was created by the National Association for Printing Leadership, NPES The Association for Suppliers of Printing, Publishing, and Converting Technologies and the Printing Industries of America in 1983. These three national associations jointly own the Graphic Arts Show Company (GASC®). GAERF was created to channel a portion of the revenues earned by GASC- managed shows into projects supporting a strong future for the industry.

In addition to the grants program, GAERF administers PrintED®, a national accreditation and certification program and MAKE YOUR MARK® in Graphic Communications, an industry image and recruiting campaign.

For additional information about the Foundation and its programs, visit the GAERF web site at www.gaerf.org or call toll-free at 866/381-9839.

###

