



Crime Fighters and Students Work to Improve Internet Safety

Story by Bob Westfall

Posted Tuesday, February 24, 2009

The West Virginia Department of Education is teaming up with Gov. Joe Manchin and Verizon to take a “byte” out of internet crime during the West Virginia Cyber Safe Summit on Tuesday at the Clay Center for the Arts and Sciences.

“Children today never knew a world without the internet,” Manchin said. “But many of them don’t understand the dangers that can lurk online. This summit will help raise awareness.”

Student teams from Huntington High School in Cabell County, as well as Hedgesville and Martinsburg high schools in Berkeley County, will share the teen perspective on cyber safety, and present how they are communicating with their peers. The students have written the first online guide on Wikipedia on cyber safety for West Virginia, including creative, online concepts for communicating safely online with their peers.

“The internet exposes our children to a vast new world,” said state Superintendent of Schools Steve Paine. “Teaching our children how to use that resource safely and protect themselves while online, playing games or surfing the Web is an important step in educating children in the 21st century.”

Featured guests include Teri Schroeder, CEO of iSafe, the leading provider of Internet safety education for schools; Cindy Southworth, technology director at the National Network to End Domestic Violence; and Sgt. Christopher Casto, head of the West Virginia State Police Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) task force.

B. Keith Fulton, president of Verizon West Virginia, the leading broadband provider in the state, said cyber safety goes along with more access to high speed internet resources.

“The internet is a wonderful tool for our youth and adults, and a fun, easy way for them to interact with others in their peer groups,” Fulton said. “But it’s important that we teach people about the Internet the same way we teach them about other things that require responsibility and care like driving a car.”

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