



March 12, 2004

## Commissioner's Report Highlights of Notable Accomplishments in USHE

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### **UHEAA/UESP:**

Utah's Educational Savings Plan, administered by UHEAA, received the top ranking as the best college savings plan in the nation in the February issue of *Morningstar FundInvestor*. They noted that nearly all states now have a "529" savings plan, and ranked Utah's first, "possibly the top 529 available." "The state of Utah gets much of the credit for crafting this low-cost gem." The magazine noted that "Utah keeps costs low by taking on the administrative burden itself and charging a rock-bottom 0.25% for its trouble." Utah was also rated as "excellent" for the quality of core investment options, "good" for investment flexibility, and "excellent" for shareholder friendliness. The program is administered by Dale Hatch, under the direction of Gail Norris.

### **Utah State University:**

USU won first place in the 2003 Best Campus TV Commercial Contest for a commercial produced to advertise its space program and the fact that USU students have sent more experiments into space than any other university. The contest was sponsored by Carnegie Communications, a market research firm that specializes in colleges and universities. The commercial was produced "in-house" by USU and according to a spokesperson for Carnegie Communications was "the most compelling and powerful of all the spots we viewed."

Assistant Professor of English Michael Sowder was awarded the T.S. Eliot Prize for Poetry for his manuscript, *The Empty Boat*. The annual award recognizes the best unpublished book-length collection of poetry.

### **Weber State University:**

The United States Air Force has enlisted the help of Weber State University associate psychology professor Lauren Fowler to help them combat fatigue. Fowler will spend this year consulting with a group of Air Force researchers at Brooks City-Base in San Antonio to study fatigue and disruptions in the circadian rhythm (the body's daily cycles of eating, sleeping and other functions) of pilots and air battle managers. The goal is to increase performance and safety.

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March 2004, Continued

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**Southern Utah  
University:**

**Southern Utah University Student body President Kaydee Weaver and her associate leaders came up with the idea for the "Going the Extra Mile for Higher Education Relay." Students from nine USHE institutions ran legs of a relay to the State Capitol to show their support for legislative funding for higher education. The SUUSA Senate came up with the idea and President Weaver took the idea and "ran with it," along with great cooperation and teamwork from all of the institutions and their student leaders across the state.**

**Snow College:**

**The College recently received its single largest donation for scholarships in its history--\$250,000--for rural, needy students.**

**College of Eastern Utah:**

**The College of Eastern Utah has recently been instrumental in establishing a committee consisting of gas and oil companies, political and business leaders and governmental agencies to provide oversight and direction for the development of Nine Mile Canyon, a local area with over 1000 identified archeological sites as well as significant gas and oil reserves. The committee has already been successful in mitigating the visual impact of several new gas wells and securing funding and local support for site preservation for the sites at greatest risk of vandalism.**

**Utah Valley State  
College:**

**Utah Valley State College's Plant Identification Team took fourth place in the Society for Range Management's (SRM) Plant Identification contest in Salt Lake City on Jan. 27. The group of six students beat out dozens of other teams from all over the United States, Canada and Mexico. The test consisted of displaying pictures of 100 atypical plants, requiring students to identify the family, genus and species of the specimen within 60 seconds.**

**Utah College of Applied  
Technology:**

**The Ogden-Weber Campus of the Utah College of Applied Technology kicked-off its new "WOW" (Widening Opportunities for Women) program with the first group of students. This program allows women to train in different non-traditional program areas to determine which career is right for them. They also receive special mentoring from local industry representatives.**