

# Speaker ties schools to business

*The Challenge Program offers cash incentives for students to perform well.*

BY PATRICK SHUSTER  
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**KITTANNING** — Local Chamber of Commerce members will be going "out to lunch" later this month to learn more about how they can contribute to the education of Armstrong County's students.

As part of its monthly informational luncheons, the chamber will feature guest speaker Mary Ann Zamias, corporate relations manager for The Challenge Program, which offers cash incentives to motivate students to perform well in various areas of their school careers.

According to the Johnstown-based program's president Daniel Perkins, "the idea of providing financial incentives to students for a job well done is not unlike the idea of year-end bonuses in the business world."

"If an employee does a good job, we reward them with a bonus. The Challenge Program does the same thing for students who perform in an exceptional manner," he said.

## Works in business world

"The idea has worked in the business world and is working for students as demonstrated by higher grades, greatly improved attendance, and overall interest in school."

Last year the program gave \$216,000 in prize money to 864 students, funded through donations from the business community.

Participating businesses are able to visit the schools and talk with students and encourage them to succeed in their schools, as well as other opportunities for the businesses to meet with the schools.

The Armstrong School District and Freeport Area School District participate in the program.

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## STUDENTS • FROM A1

A total of 56 students in the five schools each received \$250 cash awards for one of the four categories: most improved academically; best attendance; most community service; and best overall GPA.

Armstrong School District Superintendent William Kerr said, "We believe the business' presence in area schools is essential to the development of the region's work force. Making education ever more relevant to students is a major focus of schools today as we look for new ways to prepare students to be the knowledge workers in today's global economy."

The luncheon will be from

noon to 1 p.m., Sept. 28 at Lenape Technical School, 2215 Chaplin Ave., in Manor Township.

Lunch will be provided by the Culinary Arts Department of the school. Cost is \$10 for chamber members and \$12 for nonmembers.

For information, contact the Chamber of Commerce at 724-548-2951.

Reservations are due by Sept. 25.

A list of the local award winners will be published in Tuesday's Leader Times.

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