



P R E S S R E L E A S E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
January 26, 2010

CONTACT: Jason Tremblay
Public Relations Department
Berks County Intermediate Unit
610-987-8423; jastre@berksiu.org

BCIU Hosts Annual *YOU BE THE CHEMIST CHALLENGE* on February 20, 2010

Berks County Students Compete for Prizes and Prestige

READING, PA – Local middle school students will show off their knowledge of chemistry concepts, important discoveries, and chemical safety awareness at the annual *You Be The Chemist (YBTC) Challenge* on February 20, 2010, from 8 a.m.–2 p.m. at the Berks County Intermediate Unit (BCIU).

BCIU is sponsoring the Berks County Challenge in conjunction with Brenntag North America, Inc., whose North American headquarters are located in Reading. The winner will advance to the national competition on June 18 at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, where the Berks County champion will compete against other students from across the country who have competed in similar regional contests.

YBTC is a question and answer forum for students in grades 5-8 that supports an ongoing need to develop an interest in chemistry at a young age. Created by the Chemical Educational Foundation in 2003, the event aims to promote the science of chemistry, the benefits of chemicals, and the importance of chemical safety awareness in order to help reverse the shortage of chemists, engineers, and scientists in chemical industries. The *YBTC Challenge* is also a means to foster a continuing relationship between the business and education communities.

Berks County's *YBTC* representatives have fared very well in recent years. Last year's local *YBTC Challenge* winner, Nabil Shaikh of Exeter Junior High, placed second in the national competition; in 2008, he placed third nationally. Brook Bi of Exeter Township went on to win the national title in 2007.

"This event represents the tremendous value that can be achieved by cooperative efforts between education and industry," said Chet Murphy, vice president of market development for Brenntag North America. "The future development of the sciences and interest in chemistry are best achieved by developing an interest at an early age. We are very excited about the level of engagement by BCIU and the opportunity we are able to provide our young students."

At the national competition, each participant will receive fun prizes, such as chemistry kits, T-shirts, and gift certificates to the Discovery Channel Store. The first, second, and third place winners will also win money for future educational use.

In addition to the prizes, participants and a chaperone will also be treated to various activities in historic Philadelphia, such as an afternoon at the Franklin Institute of Science. For more information about the competition, please visit the CEF Web site at www.chemed.org.

###