

## **Scheduling the Texas A&M Chemistry Road Show**

### **General Information:**

#### **Cost:**

Because of generous support from the Texas A&M Chemistry Department, the Texas A&M College of Arts & Sciences, Dow Chemical Company, and contributions from individuals, the Texas A&M Chemistry Road Show is provided at no cost to hosting institutions.

PLEASE NOTE: Even though we do not charge, some municipalities do charge fees for flame effect permits and related documentation. Below I request that you provide the contact information for your local fire marshal. You should contact your fire marshal or local fire department yourself as well and ask them about any fees that will be applicable. Most cities either do not have fees or have waved them when we have given presentations since this is a not-for-profit educational event, but some municipalities have charged hosts several hundred dollars. Since we are offering the Road Show free of charge, we are not able to cover the cost of those fees, and the financial responsibility for these fees falls to the hosting institution. If your fire marshal would like more information about the Chemistry Road Show, I would be very happy to answer any questions that they have. Feel free to give them my contact information. E-mail, [jdpennington@tamu.edu](mailto:jdpennington@tamu.edu), and cell phone, (979)-777-5844, are the best way to reach me.

#### **When Registration Opens:**

For the School Year: **June 1<sup>st</sup>, for the following school year.**

For Summer Events: **August 15<sup>th</sup>, for the following summer.**

During the school year, I can only do presentations on Thursdays (and occasional weekends) due to my teaching schedule. During the Summer, I can schedule events Monday through Saturday.

For the school year, the schedule usually mostly fills up within a week or so of registration opening. The Summer is usually mostly booked by sometime in October or November. I recommend that you send me an e-mail on the day registration opens with 3 or more dates that could work for you, and I will do my best to get you on our calendar. If you do not include possible dates, everything might be taken by the time we e-mail each other back and forth. I generally recommend that people write the e-mail ahead of time and have their system set up to auto send it at midnight on June 1<sup>st</sup> or August 15<sup>th</sup> to be at or near the front of the line.

#### **Target Audience:**

Our presentation is most appropriate for 3rd grade through adult. If there are some younger children, that is OK, but they will not get as much out of it. When we do Summer Library Reading Programs or School Science Nights, it can be considered a "family event" and it is fine if younger siblings come along as well.

#### **Information I will need from you:**

- What time of day do you want the presentation? It takes about 90 minutes. I will need about 3 hr. to set up before and about 3 hr. to break down after the presentation.

- Please provide the physical address of the location where the presentation will take place. I need this both for insurance and permit paperwork as well as for Google maps to find directions to travel to your location.
- In order to fill out the insurance paperwork, I need to know approximately how many people will be in attendance.
- Please provide emergency contact information (your school or library telephone number and your cell phone number if possible) in case something happens on the day of the presentation and I need to contact you quickly. If you need to contact me, my cell phone number is (979)-777-5844.
- Please provide the telephone number and e-mail address, if possible, of the fire marshal or fire chief or fire station in your area. I will need to contact them about a permit, and I have found it difficult to find the correct contact information in some areas.
- What County and what Texas Education Region are you in? We keep track of this information to help us evaluate the reach and impact of our program.

#### **Location Requirements:**

I have a lot of equipment to move in and out. It is highly preferable if the presentation area is accessible without stairs. If there are a couple of steps up to a stage, that is fine, however, it is not feasible to haul everything up a flight of stairs.

I will need to do the presentation in an area where the audience is at least 10 feet back from the presentation tables. If I am setting up against a wall, the audience seating would need to start 20 feet out from the wall to allow space for my equipment and work area. If the presentation is in a gym or on a stage, I can adjust where I set up to meet the audience distance requirements.

For safety reasons, I cannot do the presentation outdoors. Most schools have us set up in a gym, a cafeteria, or on their theater stage if there is easy access. The gym usually works very well for both acoustics and visibility. The explosions echo better, and the audience can be close enough to have a good view, but still be at a safe distance. The downside is it would take up the use of the gym for pretty much the whole day.

Because some of the presentations involve fire/light, it is best if I can present in an area where the lights can be turned off and the presentation area can be made dark. If we are in a room with large windows, it is best that the blinds be drawn, or, better yet, some venues have covered the windows with butcher paper. This is especially true, for example, for school cafeterias that have a wall of windows.

I do have a portable sound system; however, I find that if a location already has a sound system set up, it is usually more effective than mine is. If you do have a sound system that has a \*hands free\* mic (either clip-on or headset) that would be great. I cannot hold a microphone while I am doing the demonstrations, and I move around too much for stationary mics. Again, if you do not have a hands-free system, I can use my portable system, but it never hurts to ask.

Because the Road Show includes some flame effects/explosions; you will need to contact your building administrator about putting the fire alarm system into test mode during the presentation. The sprinkler

system does not need to be turned off. Some of the flame effects/explosions could set off the alarm to call the fire department, which we want to avoid. As a precaution, someone on staff in attendance at the presentation should be prepared to call the fire department in case an actual emergency occurred. NOTE: Some schools have not been able to put the fire alarm in test mode for logistical reasons. If we are set up in a large space like a gymnasium, this should not be a problem. If the alarm cannot be put into "test" mode, it should be sufficient to have someone ready to call the fire department in case the alarm does go off. You will also need to make sure someone knows how to turn the alarm sound off.

I will need several folding tables. I will either need THREE 3'x8' tables or FOUR 3'x6' folding tables for the presentation, PLUS TWO ADDITIONAL folding tables (any size) behind the presentation area for setting up equipment.

I will also need a large trash can for clean-up afterwards.

It would be very helpful if I had access to a custodian's closet or other area with a large sink after the show in order to clean glassware before packing it up. A mop sink is ideal. A hose in an area outside of the building will also work.

That covers the usual issues. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Regards,

Jim Pennington

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