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March 4, 2009

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Beatty elementary students win state insect contest Fourth grade class nominates Vivid Dancer Damselfly

LAS VEGAS – Fourth grade students at John R. Beatty Elementary School are abuzz after learning their nomination for Nevada’s official insect, the Vivid Dancer Damselfly, was chosen from a field of 74 entries in the state insect naming contest. The contest was open to all fourth grade and Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) classrooms in Nevada. Senator Joyce Woodhouse and Assemblyman Lynn Stewart co-sponsored the bill that led to the contest and the consideration of naming the Vivid Dancer as the state insect. Senator Woodhouse and Assemblyman Stewart worked closely with classroom teachers throughout the state of Nevada to provide a unique opportunity for students to be involved in the legislative process while also promoting research skills, collaborative learning and higher-level thinking skills in Nevada students.

To continue their involvement in the selection of the state insect, Teacher David Slater and three students from Beatty Elementary School will be flown to Carson City to testify in front of the appropriate legislative committee about their insect nomination. Transportation to and from Carson City will be sponsored by Truly Nolen Pest Control as well as the Kids Voting Greater Las Vegas Board of Directors. The remaining students from the winning class will have the opportunity to view the proceedings via a videoconference at the Grant Sawyer State Office Building.

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Nevada was one of eight states without an official insect. As part of the nomination process, students in each class worked together to research different native insects and type a one page, research-based essay supporting their nomination and why the insect would be a good symbol for the state.

“This is a great example of providing students with the opportunity to be part of democracy in action,” said Hilarie Robison, executive director of Kids Voting Greater Las Vegas. “The students involved have seen they have a voice and that is a lesson in civic engagement that will be remembered for a long time.”

Entries were reviewed by a panel of judges from throughout Nevada, including four entomologists, representatives from the Nevada Department of Education, other educational specialists and a representative from Truly Nolen Pest Control, before the winning nomination was selected. Finalists included John R. Beatty, Berkeley L. Bunker, John A. Dooley and Robert L. Forbuss Elementary Schools in the Clark County School District and Westergard Elementary School in the Washoe County School District.

The Vivid Dancer, also known as *Argia vivida*, is native to the western United States and parts of western Canada. A member of the dragonfly family, damselflies can be quite large and are known for their long abdomen, short antennae, and pairs of wings. Damselflies often have brilliantly-colored blue bodies with silver wings that match Nevada’s official colors.

For more information about Clark County School District, visit www.ccsd.net.

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