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"Without or with offense to friends or foes, we sketch your world exactly as it goes." — Byron

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Science teachers honored for professional advancement

BY LINDSAY TOZER
Staff Writer

Science teachers from around the Big Country were honored Thursday for logging more than 100 hours each toward professional development.

A luncheon was held at the Abilene Country Club to recognize the more than 20 teachers who've dedicated the hours through the Region 14 Education Service Center and Tri-University Collaboration for Excellence in Science Teaching program.

"These are life-long learner," said project director Gaile Thompson of the teachers. "They have a passion to bring something back to the classroom to help students turn on a light."

The staff development program for science teachers in grades K-12 features a variety of incentives, she said. The most notable activities over the last year include a dinosaur dig at Big Bend with the University of Texas at Dallas, a field trip to NASA that included a press conference with John Glenn and tuition free, university-based courses leading to composite science certification or graduate credit.

"I got involved with this for the unique opportunities we were offered," participant Kim Cheeks said. "After the dinosaur dig, we were bringing the most up to date information back to the classroom. That kind of experience is worth so much." The Wylie Middle School science teacher is one of the 151 teachers representing 31 school districts who've received training from the program since its inception almost eight years ago, Thompson said. Teachers honored Thursday received a certificate of achievement and a certificate from state Rep. Bob Hunter, D-Abilene. Just being brought together in a spirit of camaraderie was a boost, Cheeks said. "It was a pep rally with the other teachers who care about how the students and it is important as professionals to keep educating ourselves. This is the end of February and you can get overwhelmed by even the little things going on. Today really relit the fire."

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