

East End/Third Ward News **May 20, 2007, 3:24PM**

Milby High School honored as model campus

By DOUGLAS BRITT, Chronicle Correspondent

A national petroleum trade association has selected Milby High School, 1601 Broadway, as the model school for a three-year educational curriculum designed to prepare both college- and non-college-bound students for careers in the oil-and-gas industry. The Washington-based Independent Petroleum Association of America, or IPAA, chose Milby because 30 percent of its more than 2,100 students qualify for Advanced Placement courses in math and science, said Doris Richardson, director of the IPAA Education Center in Houston. "That just knocked all the other schools out of the competition," she said, describing Milby's magnet program, the Milby Science Institute, as part of "the renaissance of the East End." Starting in Fall 2008, the Academy for Petroleum Exploration, Production & Technology coursework will be integrated into the institute's existing "Science Investigation" curricula for grades 10 through 12, she said. While the institute already offers advanced courses such as chemical kinetics, IPAA President Barry Russell said the academy will offer "a practical component of how you use those theoretical skills."

Classroom instruction will be supplemented with mentoring programs, guest speakers, internships and field trips to industry sites such as Halliburton's Real Time Decision Center, said Galen Cobb, director of industry relations for Halliburton and chairman of the academy's Steering Committee. Cobb said Halliburton will provide students with a modified version of its decision-center software so they can "get a real feel for what it's like to manage a reservoir." IPAA will supply its 100 academy students with laptops, Richardson said. Russell said IPAA decided to launch the academy partly because the oil-and-gas industry, where the average age is about 52, needs new recruits.

Jeff Gorski, Schlumberger's vice president of industry affairs and chairman of the academy's Leadership Training Task Force, said the industry offers more high-tech opportunities than most young people realize. "We're out here with everything you hear out of NASA, and these children get excited and say, 'Boy, I had no clue,'" he said.

While Milby Principal Richard Barajas said the program will offer students a "seamless transition into the college or university of their choice," Richardson said it will also help the non-college-bound student "that is focused on electronics or wants to be a machinist."

Mayor Bill White and Houston East End Chamber of Commerce President Diane Lipton hailed news of the academy, which Richardson said IPAA hopes to expand to three other campuses around Houston and to other schools across the country.

White said in a statement, "We spend a good deal of time working to keep kids in school and to help them prepare for jobs with a future.

"I can't think of a better example of a public-private partnership that shares those goals, especially here in Houston, the world's energy capital."