



Scripps exploring creation of international spelling bee

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Distinct from the Scripps National Spelling Bee, new bee concept would feature spellers from more than 50 countries

CINCINNATI, May 29, 2012 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ --Signaling the most-dramatic development in spelling bee competition since the National Spelling Bee became a live, nationally televised celebration in 1994, The E.W. Scripps Company (NYSE: SSP) today outlined a vision for a new, international spelling bee that could be staged as soon as December 2013.

The early-stage concept of the international competition features teams of three spellers from the participating countries, including the United States, chosen through national spelling bees around the world.

Scripps, which is synonymous with "spelling bee" in many corners of the globe, has sponsored the Scripps National Spelling Bee for eight decades. It seeks to marry its reputation for inspiring children to improve their spelling and increase their vocabularies with a fast-growing worldwide passion for the English language.

Two television spots airing on ESPN and ESPN2 during this year's Scripps National Spelling Bee express this idea. Both spots portray children from different countries competing in a spelling competition. In the first spot, titled "Connections," a South African boy hears an English word and thinks through its spelling in his first language, Zulu, and his second language, English. In the second, titled "Inner Thoughts," a Chinese girl reflects on her word in both Mandarin and English. Both spots conclude with the vision for a new, international spelling competition alongside the US-based Scripps National Spelling Bee. The spots will air during the Bee's Semifinals on ESPN2 (May 31, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. ET) and the Championship Finals on ESPN (May 31, 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. ET).

International Interest in Spelling

Since 1976, the Bee has included competitors from outside the United States. Today, spellers from the Bahamas, Canada, China, Ghana, Jamaica, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea compete in the Bee.

"As English has become the global *lingua franca*, speakers and learners of English in the United States and around the world have found inspiration in the Scripps National Spelling Bee," said Paige Kimble, director of the Scripps National Spelling Bee. "Their interest has, in turn, inspired the vision of a spelling bee for the world."

Vision for the International Competition

To turn this concept into a reality, the Bee has begun researching, collaborating and forming essential partnerships. The Bee has invited its eight current spelling bee organizers in the Bahamas, Canada, China, Ghana, Jamaica, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea to collaborate on the international program's rules and guidelines. If the necessary program elements are in place on or before January 31, 2013, the Bee will announce the new international program.

Scripps has established some of the initial framework for the international competition. The Bee anticipates countries from around the world, including the United States, hosting their own national spelling bees and naming their own national spelling bee champions. Each participating country, including the United States, would then select a team of three spellers to compete on an international stage before a worldwide broadcast audience. Each speller would compete individually, but with the opportunity to call on teammates for assistance one time during the competition.

The international spelling bee would be unique in how it rewards its participants. Kimble said awards could be given for the highest achievements by spellers whose first language is not English, the best humanitarian uses of the English language and, of course, the highest overall ranked competitors.

News Conference

Kimble will host a news conference on Wednesday, May 30, at 12:15 p.m. ET (between Rounds Two and Three of the 2012 Scripps National Spelling Bee) at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center, with a call-in option for those unable to attend. The news conference will be open to credentialed members of the media.

To apply for media credentials, please visit <http://www.spellingbee.com/media>. To access the conference call by telephone, dial 1-800-230-1074 (U.S.) or 1-612-288-0329 (international) approximately 10 minutes before the start of the call. Members of the media will need the name of the call ("spelling bee") to be granted access. Callers also will be asked to provide their names and company affiliations.

A replay line will be open from 2:00 p.m. (Eastern) May 30 until 11:59 p.m. June 6. The domestic number to access the replay is 1-800-475-6701 and the international number is 1-320-365-3844. The access code for both numbers is 247846.

A replay of the conference call will be archived and available online for an extended period of time following the call. To access the audio replay, visit <http://www.spellingbee.com/media> approximately four hours after the call.

About the Scripps National Spelling Bee

The Scripps National Spelling Bee is the nation's largest and longest-running educational program. We are administered on a not-for-profit basis by The E.W. Scripps Company in cooperation with local spelling bee sponsors in the United States, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands and Department of Defense Schools in Europe; and international sponsors in the Bahamas, Canada, China, Ghana, Jamaica, Japan, New

Zealand and South Korea.

About The E.W. Scripps Company

Scripps (www.scripps.com) delivers quality journalism and creates valuable marketing environments through television stations, newspapers and a growing menu of digital products and services that now includes social games. Creative and mission-driven employees "give light so the people can find their own way" at 19 television stations in major U.S. markets and at newspapers in 13 markets.

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