

# The ReSET Report

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November 2010 • Volume 33

## Highlights from a Red-Hot Career

It was late 1971 when Bob Blumberg embarked on a project that would rank as one of the high points in his vast nuclear engineering career. Working for Oak Ridge National Labs, the mechanical engineer by training would lead the first decommissioning of a nuclear power plant, the Elk River Reactor, operated at the time by a rural power company in Minnesota.

The dismantling operation took roughly three years to complete. "We were quite far off in initial estimates," says



**Bob Blumberg, who oversaw the first decommissioning of a nuclear power plant in 1971, chats with his wife Shirley at the volunteer reception in June.**

Blumberg, "It took much longer and was more expensive than we planned." The most difficult part of the operation was to cut up the large and highly radioactive structural components into pieces and transfer them into

shipping casks to be sent for burial in Idaho. Blumberg was instrumental in developing the new "plasma torch" technology specifically for this task. The remotely operated plasma torch made it possible to cut thick sections of steel underwater and in air without releasing any radioactivity and with no spread of contamination either to the environment or where the dismantling crews were working.

The dismantling of the Elk River Reactor was completed successfully and safely in September, 1974, and the nuclear industry gained a new technology in its arsenal for future decommissioning projects.

## Back to School for ReSET Founder Sharlin



As the importance of early exposure to science learning becomes clearer, ReSET is expanding its reach. ReSET CEO Harold Sharlin is working this term with children ages two to five at the Bright Horizons Child Care Center located at the National Science Foundation in Arlington. In the photo (left) Dr. Sharlin works with five-year-old students on magnetism. See CEO Sharlin's thoughts on early science education on the Huffington Post by searching "Sharlin" on [www.huffingtonpost.com](http://www.huffingtonpost.com).

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Contact Roberta Goren at [rsgoren@verizon.net](mailto:rsgoren@verizon.net)

### *In Quotes...*

"...Please pass on my appreciation for all the DC STEM Alliance members have done to help our kids and schools over the years. If we ignite even one child's passion for science, tech, engineering and math, all the frustration and banging on doors is worth it."

—Mary Lord,  
DC Board of Education

**Science Quiz Answer:**  
**(C) 84,000**



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### ***Chemical Cornucopia...***

**How many chemicals are in commercial use in the U.S.?**

**(a) 12,000 (b) 38,000**

**(c) 84,000 (d) 103,000**

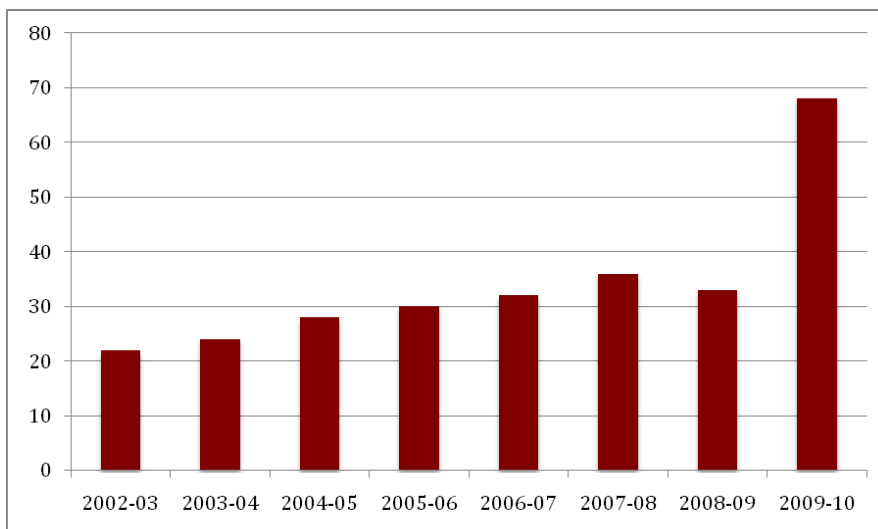
**...See inside for answer**

## ReSET Reaches More Students; Welcomes New Volunteers

ReSET grew significantly during the 2009-2010 school year. The impressive gains occurred across the board, with 33 volunteers active in 25 schools and 68 classrooms, reaching 1,320 students.

This represents an increase of 17 volunteers, 12 additional schools and 34 additional classrooms from the 2008-2009 school year. Perhaps most

Trends in Number of ReSET Classroom Programs



exciting, ReSET reached 572 more students than in the previous year.

Of the 17 additional volunteers in 2009-2010, 12 were first-time ReSET program participants. Their ranks include seven working scientists or engineers, one recent graduate in mechanical engineering and four retired professionals.