

Elim students 'solve' their way to victory

ELIM — Elim junior high students currently hold the national record for the most points ever scored in an international competition called Future Problem Solving.

Elim's students put in more than 100 hours of homework and preparation for the state competition, which was held April 20-22. The students outperformed eight other state-finalist teams from their grade level at Alaska's Future Problem Solving State Bowl.

The subject area was Future Employment, but not until the two-hour competition started did the problem-solvers know what would be asked about the topic.

The test situation involved a Southern California computer company, in the year 2020. Using no notes or books, the students had to tackle over a dozen complex issues, including flextime, flexplace, maternity leave, comparative worth, electronic supervision and ergonomics.

Elim's team, consisting of Anna

Nagaruk, Gretchen Guthridge, Jeanne Jemewouk and Melissa Wesley, scored 206.5 points. Second place went to one of Soldotna's two teams, with 185 points.

The state evaluators cited the Elim students for their ability to address the specific situation, that is, for being able to "think on their feet."

Other junior high teams that competed were from Anchorage, Kenai, Cordova and Juneau. Elim was the only village school to make the state finals, at any grade level.

About 175,000 students from the United States, Canada and 14 foreign countries are involved in this challenging and demanding program.