

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### Power firm backs science improvement program in public schools

**Villanueva, Misamis Oriental** - German-owned firm STEAG State Power Inc (SPI) is backing-up efforts to improve quality of public education in the field of sciences.

This developed as government reports of dismal performance of Filipino students from public elementary and high schools in science and mathematics. Recent Philippine Human Development Report (PHDR) indicates that the country performed poorly in International Mathematics and Science Test, ranking second and third from the bottom in the mathematics and science categories, respectively.

Among the reasons cited include the lack or absence of quality instructional materials and equipment, poor school facilities, and a dearth of highly competent teachers who are the students' primary source of learning in the absence of books and other learning materials.

During a recent roundtable discussion initiated by SPI to look deeper into the causes of the deteriorating quality of student performance in the science subject, school administrators present during the forum affirmed the findings of the PHDR and recommended immediate interventions not only from government but also from the private sector. Among the recommendations include the provision of appropriate science equipment and facilities, as well as teaching methodology skills upgrading for science teachers.

As an initial response, SPI committed to provide basic science equipment and sponsor a special teachers training program to select schools in its host communities in Villanueva and Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental via an inter-school science competition among public elementary schools in the area.

Scheduled on 21 September 2006 at the Villanueva Gymnasium, the contest will highlight this year's commemoration of September as *Science Month*. About P150,000 worth of prizes will be given away in the form of science equipment, short-term scholarship program for science teachers at Xavier University, computer-literacy training for students courtesy of sponsoring partner STI College, trophies, medals and gift certificates.

SPI President Andreas Rubin said the company's commitment goes beyond providing safe, efficient and reliable supply of energy to Mindanao. *"We are also committed to help improve the quality of lives of the people especially those living within the vicinity of our business operations"* Rubin said.

SPI is currently putting-up the Mindanao Coal-Fired Power Plant in Villanueva, Misamis Oriental to address Mindanao's growing demand for electricity. The plant will start commercial operations before the end of the current year.

