

Conference gives students global view

Manzullo hosts 21st Century Leaders workshop in Rockford

By BRETT RATNER
Herald News Service

ROCKFORD – High school students received an education in ethics and foreign policy Monday at U.S. Rep. Don Manzullo's 21st Century Leaders conference.

Students at the Rock Valley College conference were asked to discuss world issues, such as what to do with Iraq.

Lt. Col. Richard Hewitt, director of economics with the Social Sciences Department of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, conducted the workshop on global responsibility.

"The conference brings high-achieving high school kids to a forum where they can learn about the issues of the day and their role in those issues," Hewitt said. "We all have a role. It's worth recognizing."



Manzullo

Kevin Abbot, a senior at McHenry East High School, was among the 200 students at the conference.

"The issues raised were good

ones, not only ethically but constitutionally," Abbot said.

Workshops included "America's Global Responsibility," "Getting Out Your Leadership Message," "Freedom's Challenge in the New America," "Hot Careers in the 21st Century" and "U.S. Representative for a Day."

Politicians, lawyers and journalists led the seminars.

Amanda Palazzo, a senior at McHenry East High School, said the workshop on U.S. global responsibility inspired her to think more carefully about the international community.

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Ryan Rayburn / The Northwest Herald

McHenry East High School student Amanda Palazzo (right) listens to Lt. Col. Richard Hewitt of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point on Monday during a seminar titled "America's Global Responsibility" as part of U.S. Rep. Don Manzullo's 21st Century Leaders conference at Rock Valley College in Rockford.

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"It justifies the reasons America has to stay involved in global issues," she said.

"There's a lot of stuff out there that (most Americans) don't know," Marengo High School senior Aaron Piper said.

Social studies teachers at the conference said the hands-on workshops lent context to concepts taught in government, social studies and history classes.

"I like the fact (students) are exposed to real-life situations," said Marengo High School social studies teacher Ron Turner.

Richmond-Burton social studies teacher Chris Nolan agreed.

"Who better of a source than a congressman of their legislative district from which to learn political views and learn what his concerns are?" Nolan said.

"Kids can get a good understanding of what's going on in their county and their legislative district."