

Format changes for spelling bee

County contest to be on one night instead of three

Melissa Linebrink
The Chronicle-Telegram

Abbreviate: to reduce (anything) in length, duration, etc.; make briefer.

As in, this year's 36th annual Educational Service Center of Lorain County and The Chronicle-Telegram's Spelling Bee will be abbreviated.

Yes, for the first time in the bee's history, it won't take place over three nights.

Rather than splitting the bee up into two preliminary bees and then a final bee, there will be only one spelling bee, Educational Service Center of Lorain County coordinator of special projects Debbie Hunt said.

"We changed the format because it was becoming hard and harder to find volunteers, bee advisers and students to commit to possibly doing a spelling bee two consecutive Fridays — one for their actual bee and another for the finals, if they make it to the finals," Hunt said.

With two preliminaries and one final bee, that locked the volunteers

and location up for three straight Fridays.

"Time is tight for everyone, and something had to give," Hunt said. "I feel it will be very successful and am looking forward to it."

And even though the bee will take place in one night and no one is sure how long it will last, breaks will be given — especially since the pronouncer, Bruce Van Dyke of WEOL-AM 930 radio, will need a few minutes to regroup.

"Bruce will get a break," Hunt said. "Once we are down to the last approximately 25 kids, we will take a 20-minute break. Then we will do the second half of the bee until we get a winner."

The time factor wasn't the only reason the bee changed its format.

Hunt is excited about the new format. While the prior format worked well for decades, she said this new setup will be a more precise way to select a winner. In the old setup, the final 16 from each bee moved on regardless, which doesn't fit the traditional spelling bee setup of spelling until an error knocks someone out.

Participation to the bee is open to seventh- and eighth-graders in all public, private, parochial, charter

See **SPELLING, B2**

SPELLING

From B1

and home schools in the Chronicle's readership area. The number of spellers from each school is based on the combined seventh- and eighth-grade enrollments at that school or student group.

This year there will be 54 spellers at the bee starting at 6 p.m. Friday at Avon Mid-

dle School, 3445 Long Road, Avon.

The public is invited to attend the spelling bee, which will determine who will represent Lorain County, the Educational Service Center and The Chronicle at the 92nd National Scripps Spelling Bee the week of May 27 in Washington, D.C.

Contact Melissa Linebrink at 329-7243 or mlinebrink@chroniclet.com. Follow her on Twitter @MLinebrinkCT.