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## **East High students in PCC auto class preparing for Soap Box Derby races**

**PUEBLO** – Pueblo East High School will be adhering to the “It Takes a Village” principle in hopes of producing victory this summer in Pueblo’s annual Soap Box Derby.

Students in Pueblo Community College’s “Automotive Body Repair & Refinishing” course taught at East High by PCC Dept. Chair Jim Torres are working on the assembly, paint and bodywork for their Super Stock entry. They’re also counting big time on fellow schoolmates from the award-winning Mathematics, Engineering and Science Achievement (MESA) team to make their race car as fast as possible.

The local Soap Box Derby is scheduled for June 20 on Pueblo’s East Side (Joplin St. south of Fourth St.), and the prize for the lucky winner of each of the Stock, Super Stock and Masters divisions will qualify for the national competition scheduled for July 25 in Akron, Ohio. Barring unforeseen circumstances, Torres thinks the talent level of East’s students will pay off big on the local race day.

“The automotive students are really excited about having this car in the Soap Box Derby,” he said. “And these are high-caliber math and science students that they’ll be working with to try to get it to go faster.”

East’s MESA teams have forged an outstanding track record. Last June, they finished second in the nation (for the second consecutive year) in competition held at the University of Maryland. In December, a new group captured the state championship at the University of Colorado. And in early March, they took first place in the CSU-Pueblo Design Challenge.

While the PCC automotive class at East High students is for juniors and seniors, the rider in their Super Stock car will be sophomore Armando Mojica, who is the younger brother of one of the students. Mojica plans to enter the auto program in the next academic year.

This will be the fourth consecutive year that the Soap Box Derby has been held in Pueblo. There were 32 entries last year, and the winners of all three divisions made the trip to Akron.

Credits earned in the “Automotive Body Repair & Refinishing” course are among those that PCC offers at East High and are applicable to PCC’s automotive certificate and associate and degree programs. Taking classes while still in high school gives these students a leg up on their education and also provides them the opportunity to work a paid apprenticeship through the Automotive Youth Education System (AYES).

They also become a member of the Skills USA VICA club and are eligible to participate in a number of leadership activities and competitions. For more information about the program, contact Torres at 549-3249 or via e-mail at [jim.torres@pueblocc.edu](mailto:jim.torres@pueblocc.edu).

For more information about the Soap Box Derby, contact Mary Scarcello, the local organization’s president, at 544-0902 or via e-mail at [mryscarcello1@msn.com](mailto:mryscarcello1@msn.com).

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*Founded in 1933, Pueblo Community College is a premier teaching institution focused on providing academic and service excellence to help its students acquire the 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills needed to better their lives. An educational and technological leader, PCC fosters economic development and utilizes strong partnerships in the communities it serves through its Pueblo, Fremont and Southwest campuses.*