

CNMI

PREL's service center in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has moved. The new location is Marianas High School, Building H, on Saipan. The center has a new phone number, (670) 234-6000, and a new fax number, (670) 234-7735.

Guam

The Mathematics Education for Novice Teachers: Opportunities for Reflection (MENTOR) Project held its Inaugural Institute in Guam, January 6-9. This new program supports mathematics education in the U.S.-affiliated Pacific by promoting mentoring and other forms of support for novice teachers. About half of the institute was devoted to mathematics education and the other half was spent training participants to be mentors. Guam's Department of Education expressed its appreciation that the event took place as planned despite the hardships caused by Supertyphoon Pongsona.

Pohnpei

The 20th annual Pacific Educational Conference will be held July 21-24, 2003, in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia. The theme for this year's conference is "Protecting the environment through culture, literacy, and technology." For more information see www.prel.org/pec.

PRELSTAR

PREL has received a three-year renewal of its PRELSTAR grant from the U.S. Department of Education (U.S. ED). The PRELSTAR project is one of U.S. ED's Star Schools programs, which are grants awarded to organizations working to promote distance education. PRELSTAR's mission is to enhance learning in the Pacific region by enabling and promoting the use of distance learning technology. The project develops and delivers educational programs and provides training and technical assistance. For more information contact PRELSTAR Program Director Steve Baxendale at (808) 441-1363 or baxendas@prel.org.

MORE INSTRUCTION TIME LOST

Supertyphoon Pongsona Batters Guam, Chuuk, and Rota

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Photo: Sherey T. Tahmanglo

► For the second time in six months, Guam's students were forced to rely on bottled water after Supertyphoon Pongsona contaminated island water supplies.

In early December Supertyphoon Pongsona battered a region that had barely begun to recover from last July's Typhoon Chata'an. Pongsona caused significant damage in northern Chuuk State in the Federated States of Micronesia before pounding the islands of Guam and Rota in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands with sustained winds of over 150 mph. In the days following the storm, President Bush declared both Guam and Rota federal disaster areas.

Six weeks after the storm, one quarter of Guam's households still had no electricity, and many still had no running water. Guam's public schools played an important role, providing shelter for three weeks to thousands who had been left homeless. Starting in early January, however, efforts were focused on restarting classes as quickly as possible. When schools started to reopen in mid-January, bottled water remained the only source of safe drinking water. Serious damage to their campuses forced several schools to schedule double sessions, with some students attending in the morning and the others coming in the afternoon. Guam's public schools lost at least three weeks of instruction, in addition to the week that was lost after Chata'an.

Education on Rota was also affected by Pongsona. All three of Rota's schools were damaged, and Rota's students lost three weeks of instruction due to the storm.

Earlier in the week the storm caused damage to crops and buildings in the Hall and Weito islands in Chuuk State. Several school buildings in this region were seriously damaged. Chuuk's continuing recovery from the devastation of Chata'an was set back considerably by this latest storm.

