

- Special to the Daily Leader The Crusader student newspaper staff at Seward County Community College/Area Technical School received an Online Pacemaker Finalist Award at the National Media Convention in Kansas City recently.



The Associated Collegiate Press Pacemaker is very prestigious in collegiate journalism, often compared to the Pulitzer Prize, so being a finalist for the award is an honor in and of itself.

At the conference, the staff also learned that the CrusaderNews.com online was awarded fourth place for main page presentation in the 16th edition of "The Best of Collegiate Design." Judging for this award included two- and four-year colleges. The online judging took place in the spring 2008, so former online editor Luke Wempe, Lawrence, takes much of the credit.

"Onlines are typically judged in the spring since so many schools use the fall as a teaching and developing time for Web sites," said adviser Anita Reed. "We're very proud of Luke and his work on the online and the plans this staff has to improve this spring."

Editors Jessica Lulf and Morgan Allaman attended sessions on how to present photo sound slides and plan to implement those on CrusaderNews.com starting in the spring of 2009.

"Sound slides will allow us to combine sound with our pictures online," Lulf said. "We feel this will benefit viewers and make events have added life."

On the newspaper side of the competition, transportation expenses may have cost the Crusader an award. Only about 2,000 attended the convention, compared to traditional numbers of 3,000 or more, so to keep categories extremely competitive, all colleges who publish less than weekly were thrown in to compete with larger schools that print weekly. Unfortunately, the Crusader did not come home with any awards for the newspaper, but the staff came home with fresh ideas on how to improve.

"We do feel really proud of what we have accomplished this semester,"

said Lulf. "The staff consists of very talented individuals who strive to make every issue of the paper better than the last one."

Since returning to the college from the convention, the staff started a redesign of the Crusader.

"So far we have received positive feedback on our new look," Lulf said.