

Local instructors travel to Egypt

By KELLY WINTERS
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Two instructors from Western Piedmont Community College will arrive in Cairo, Egypt, this afternoon to begin a six-week Fulbright project along with 12 other North Carolina community college instructors.

Ralph Soney, a history teacher, and sociology teacher Grady Church are members of the 14-

person group, which will travel throughout Egypt and Israel for lectures and tours on the first such trip granted to a state community college system.

The Hayes Fulbright grant is given annually to college or university instructors to allow them to travel abroad on study tours designed to enhance their knowledge of various subjects and to teach in other nations.

Both men from the Morganton

community college applied for the program knowing it would be an opportunity for them to absorb a wealth of knowledge in a short amount of time.

"My going will add some credibility to the courses I teach," said Soney, who has taught western civilization at WPCC for six years. "Being able to share some personal experiences with your

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classes about sites of history makes it more interesting. I think it's going to be a good experience."

Soney, who will study the culture of Egypt and Israel, said, "This is certainly not a vacation. We're going to create a project academic in nature."

Church, who has taught sociology for 19 years at the college, said participating in the project will also give him a fresh view on some old subjects.

"My study will be two-fold," he said. "I'll be looking at the family structure there as well as the dominant and minority groups in the structure of their societies."

"I think it's a real opportunity, to be able to study in a different setting and meet different people and see a different culture," he said.

Preparation for the six-week adventure has been intense, with several pre-departure meetings held at Sand Hills Community College in Pinehurst, as well as "lots of packing," according to Soney.

Lectures will be held at the American University in Cairo



Photo by Kelly Winters

Ralph Soney (l) and Grady Church take trip.

and the University of Jerusalem, with tours to include field trips to several pyramids, the Suez Canal and other Middle Eastern sites.

Both teachers said their family and friends had been very supportive about the trip, with both

expressing their appreciation to WPCC.

"The college has been very supportive in us making this extended trip," Soney said. "We are looking forward to sharing our experiences when we come back."