

Walmart donates money to student incentive program

By VICKI ROCK
vickir@dallyamerican.com

Somerset Area High School Principal Mark Gross said educators are always trying to find ways to give students incentives.

"The Challenge Program has been here for several years and we do see a difference," he said. "We tell the students on scholarship days that they can see the importance of what community is and what community does, and the importance of giving back when they are able."

The Walmart Founda-

tion's State Giving Program on Friday donated \$51,000 to the Challenge Program. The Walmart Foundation grant will be used for academic incentive programs in 16 schools in seven counties in the region, including Somerset and Shanksville-Stonycreek high schools in Somerset County. Each school will receive \$3,000, except for the Franklin County Career & Technology Center, which will receive \$6,000 to be used for two sessions.

Renee Shaw, program development director for the Challenge Program,

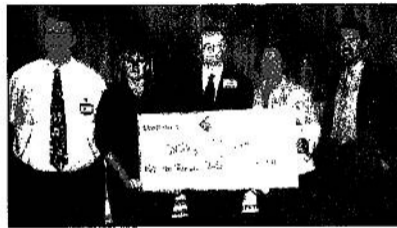
said that the program works to motivate students to perform well by providing financial incentives for successes in school. The program rewards four students from each of the sophomore, junior and senior classes with a \$250 check in the categories of academic improvement, attendance, community service and academic excellence.

"In addition, business partners are matched with participating schools to fund awards and, just as importantly, mentor students and support them in achieving their own long-term goals,"

she said.

The Challenge Program started in Johnstown and is now in four states.

"Walmart is pleased to be supporting the Challenge Program," said Walmart market manager Rich Cravotta. "We are committed to helping those in need in the communities we serve. Through this grant we are hopeful that area students and their parents will continue to enjoy a quality education and the success it promises for your young people, their families and our communities as a whole."



Staff photo by Vicki Rock

Bill Graham, Chambersburg Walmart store manager; Wendy Reddinger, Somerset Walmart store manager; Rich Cravotta, Walmart market manager; Renee Shaw, director of program development for the Challenge Program; and Chris Koop, representing U.S. Rep. Mark Critz, at a symbolic check presentation on Friday.