Sara Vogler, Jose Castro, Aaron Weatherford, Alejandro Gonzalez, and I hosted the SPS booth at Gladys Spindletop Museum in Beaumont, TX from 10am until 2:30pm. Approximately three dozen kids, K-12, stopped by the booth, along with their parents. Set-up of the booth and demos began at 10am and students started trickling in at 12:30pm.

We entertained the kids with demos using electromagnetic phenomena. Using the jumping ring we demonstrated how the change in magnetic flux would induce a magnetic field in a non-magnetic material which would oppose the magnetic field induced from the current in the coil. We didn’t go into too much detail with the little kids as we did with the older visitors but they enjoyed catching the ring after we flipped the switch. We also showed how changing the magnetic flux can induce a current with the galvanometer set-up. We had magnets to show how like poles repel each other.

We also talked about how light was polarized with our two polarizing sheets and how modern 3D glasses are based off this technology. We then had kids look at 3D images with the cyan and magenta glasses and explained how you are really seeing two different images that your brain puts together to create 3D perception and had them look with the modern 3D
glasses and explained why it didn’t work. The kids really enjoyed looking at the 3D images!

We had the kids sitting on a stool and then holding a spinning wheel and they observed how it would rotate them in the opposite direction of the spinning wheel. At least a dozen kids participated in this particular demonstration. We also had several tubes with slits so that the kids could view the solar spectra but we made sure they didn’t look directly at the sun. It was too bright outside to do the demonstration about how fiber optics works.

Overall, this event was very successful. All STST Participants felt the students had a wonderful time and were thoroughly engaged in the demonstrations. My only disappointment was that it was too bright outside to use the green laser and the spinning pinwheel inside the vacuum. Sara suggested that to improve this event we needed more “sun cover and better advertising to the local schools.” She suggested that we not only hit the math and science classes but also the PE and history classes. Aaron agrees that “interacting with younger students is always rewardingly challenging. It requires creative explanations of concepts, and is satisfying to see a genuine expression of interest on the children’s faces.”