



# THE CHEMISTRY ROAD SHOW

// Tuesday, March 14, 2017 //

**B**ringing science to life is Dr. James Pennington's passion. For one hour, the renowned host of The Texas A&M Chemistry Road Show will turn the Lady Bird Ballroom at Hotel Van Zandt into a giant lab, with visually compelling experiments and commentary.

The Chemistry Road Show is a free public service program with a 30-plus-year tradition of serving Texas by educating and inspiring generations of students within their communities, using chemistry and basic science as the catalyst for lifelong learning.



The Texas A&M Chemistry Road Show is one hot ticket, dazzling and inspiring audiences across Texas with scientific wonders involving fire, explosions, weird polymers, and super-cold materials.

**Through the power of sensory impact, students of all ages learn that:**

- Chemistry, unlike magic, is comprehensible;
- They already comprehend some of it;
- Chemistry is a human activity—one which real people love and find exciting;
- Chemistry and chemicals, like any other kind of knowledge and technology, are safe and beneficial when used carefully and intelligently.

And then, there's the ultimate lesson that, ideally, lasts long beyond the show's surprises and excitement: Not only are chemicals and chemistry vital to our lives, but they also can be fascinating and fun!

For nearly a decade, chemist James Pennington has coordinated the Chemistry Road Show, founded in the mid-1980s by the late Texas A&M chemist John L. Hogg, who envisioned the show's pioneering concept of taking science to the public, enabling people to experience science in basic and entertaining ways within the comfortable confines of a familiar educational environment. The Road Show is funded by the Texas A&M Department of Chemistry and the College of Science in partnership with The Dow Chemical Company and Shell Oil Company with the timeless goal of fueling public interest in exploring the wonders of science, regardless of age or experience level.



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*(continued)*

### Science in Motion

Each summer and on occasional days during the school year, Dr. Pennington treks across Texas in a 2011 Chevy Express cargo model van donated by Dow and custom-outfitted to meet the program's transportation and safety needs. With Pennington in the driver's seat, the Road Show has expanded from about 30 performances seen by roughly 6,000 students in the Brazos Valley in 2008 to 83 shows reaching more than 22,000 students statewide in 2016. He logged more than 7,000 miles last summer alone, spreading scientific goodwill to supplement summer enrichment programs, library reading programs, and scout camps. He also appears at museums and outreach programs held on the Texas A&M campus.

### Inspiration of a Different Color

Every bit as colorful as the trademark tie-dyed lab coat he dons for each show, Pennington takes great care to introduce his audiences to chemistry using many of the tricks of the trade that his mentor Dr. Hogg himself originated, from Nitro, the liquid nitrogen-powered Road Show mascot, to the flaming Book of Knowledge. Audience members can expect to see a number of chemical wonders that turn ordinary objects and events into exciting learning experiences, including color-changing reactions, a genie that emerges from a bottle, iron that burns as brightly as the sun, and a pinch of dry powder that instantly solidifies a cup full of water. They will be dazzled by polymers growing before their eyes, even as their minds are stretched by the wonders they are witnessing. Without leaving their seats, they will participate in experiments, make observations and test hypotheses, and, to their amazement, learn that they know much more about science than they may ever have guessed.

### For more info, contact:

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### About the College:

As the scientific core of Texas A&M University, the College of Science takes pride in providing the highest quality science education to all Texas A&M majors while delivering scholarly research and technical expertise to the world and preparing our students to become the next generation of scientific leaders.