



CONTACT:

Angela Hemingway, 208.332.1726, angela.hemingway@STEM.idaho.gov

Crispin Gravatt, 208.488.0946, grants@STEM.idaho.gov

Tony Harrison, 208.332.1726, tony@COMMposition.biz

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Pocatello and Rigby high school projects earn top honors at third annual Eastern Idaho Science & Engineering Fair

POCATELLO, Idaho (March 20, 2019) — Judges at the 2019 Eastern Idaho Science & Engineering Fair declared a project from Pocatello High School the Best of Fair award winner and one from Rigby High School as the Fair Runner Up. They were among 86 projects presented by 130 students from four Eastern Idaho schools at the third annual event, which the Idaho STEM Action Center staged March 8 at Idaho State University.

Best of Fair winners

“Suspension Brace for Impact Resistance” submitted by Hayli Austin and Madisyn Facer from Pocatello High School garnered the other Best of Fair award. In addition, they earned a Best in Category in Engineering, Math and Computer Science and a Category Gold award, as well as U.S. Air Force Awards and the Third Place Idaho Academy of Science & Engineering Award.

On top of serious bragging rights, the two students and their mentor earned all-expense-paid trips to Phoenix to compete in the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair May 12-17.

Fair Runner Up

Meanwhile, Rigby High School’s Kyla Dowalo, Ciara Hanson, and Kinnley Wilding earned Fair Runner Up for their project titled “Are There Factors in Adults Lives That Make Them Prone To Mental Illnesses?” The trio also earned a Best in Category in Behavioral and Social Sciences and a Category Gold Award.

Dowalo, Hanson, Wilding, and their mentor also earned all-expense-paid trips to attend the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in Phoenix May 12-17 as observers. The STEM Action Center sends observers to the Intel ISEF so they can apply what they learned at the event to their Idaho Science & Engineering Fair entries the following year, as well as share their insights with fellow students.

Five strands, many awards

Students in ninth through 12th grades throughout Eastern Idaho were eligible to submit entries in five categories: Animal, Biomedical, and Microbiological Sciences; Behavioral and Social Sciences; Earth, Environmental, and Plant Sciences; Engineering, Mathematics, and Computer Science; and Physical Sciences. The remaining Best in Category projects included:

- “Taeniasis and Global Occurrence” submitted by Rigby High School’s Kylie Wickham earned the Best in Category award in Animal, Biomedical, and Microbiological Sciences and a Category Gold award.

- “Eutrophication Prevention Through the Use of Planter Modules” submitted by Pocatello High School’s Karl Parsons earned the Best in Category award in Earth, Environmental, and Plant Sciences and a Category Gold award, as well as the NASA Earth System Science Award.
- “Viscosity of Fluid vs. Time to Glug” submitted by Idaho Falls High School’s Tyler Cheney and Heath Springman earned the Best in Category award in Physical Sciences and a Category Gold award, as well as the First Place Idaho Academy of Science & Engineering Award and the Mu Alpha Theta Award.

Judges honored nine more projects with Category Gold awards: “Oats vs. Wheat Bran: Which Is Better to Grow Mealworms,” an Animal, Biomedical, and Microbiological Sciences entry by Idaho Falls High School’s Austin Archibald and Remy Stolworthy; “Typing With Taped Thumbs,” an Animal, Biomedical, and Microbiological Sciences entry by Idaho Falls High School’s Emma Rice; “How Our Brains Perceive Color in Food” a Behavioral and Social Sciences entry by Idaho Falls High School’s Val Arevalo and Liz Stewart; “A Study of the Correlation Between Myers-Briggs Psychological Types and Mental Disorders,” a Behavioral and Social Sciences entry by Idaho Falls High School’s Caleb Chandler; “On the Reverse Psychology of Memory,” a Behavioral and Social Sciences entry by Idaho Falls High School’s Scotty Lighthouse; “How Does Pretreating Seeds in Different Temperatures Affect the Overall Germination of Plants,” an Earth, Environmental, and Plant Sciences entry by Idaho Falls High School’s Natalie Jessmore; “Snow Physics,” an Engineering, Mathematics, and Computer Science entry by Idaho Falls High School’s Peregrin Eddington and Cameron Peck; “The Effects of Gravity on Shapes,” a Physical Sciences entry by Idaho Falls High School’s Madi Andreason, Caroline Keller, and Danielle Klaass; and “Magnetic Power,” a Physical Sciences entry by Idaho Falls High School’s Ryan Grimes and Luke Smith.

The STEM Action Center also presented 35 projects with Category Silver awards and an additional 21 special awards from the American Meteorological Society, American Psychological Association, ASM Materials Education Foundation, Association for Women Geoscientists, Genius Olympiad, the Idaho Academy of Science and Engineering, Intel, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Office of Naval Research, Ricoh, the Society for In Vitro Biology, the Stockholm International Water Institute, the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Metric Association, and Yale Science and Engineering Association.

A group of local experts from an array of STEM-related fields served as judges.

One of three regional fairs

EISEF is one of three regional science fairs the STEM Action Center stages statewide each spring. The Coeur d’Alene Resort hosted the Northern Idaho Science & Engineering Fair March 1, and Boise State University hosted the Western Idaho Science & Engineering Fair March 15. The Best of Fair winners from those events and select observers will join the top EISEF prizewinners at the international science fair courtesy of the STEM Action Center.

Ensuring economic prosperity

According to STEM Action Center executive director Dr. Angela Hemingway, competitions like the Idaho Science & Engineering Fairs are important to the state's future, because they offer students opportunities to engage in original research projects aligned with their interests and meet and learn with other motivated students in their area.

“Our Eastern Idaho fair continues to grow significantly, from 24 projects in 2016, our inaugural year, to 86 this year,” Dr. Hemingway said. “Moreover, the quality of the research is impressive and the work our students are doing is competitive at the international level. The technical skills gained from participating in our Idaho Science & Engineering Fairs, as well as the ability to communicate results, think deeply and critically about issues, and solve real-world problems, will serve these students well as they transition into the workforce.”

Hemingway said the Idaho Department of Labor predicts upwards of 100,000 STEM jobs will exist in Idaho by 2024. She said these jobs will represent \$6.5 billion in personal income and almost \$350 million in tax revenue if Idaho's workforce is poised to fill them.

About the Idaho STEM Action Center

The Idaho STEM Action Center was created in 2015 because Idaho citizens are not entering the STEM pipeline fast enough to meet current and future Idaho workforce needs. Its goals are to coordinate and facilitate implementation of science, technology, engineering, and math programs, align education and workforce needs, and increase awareness of STEM learning and careers throughout Idaho. The organization is working with industry, government, educators, and students to develop new resources and support high-quality teacher professional-development opportunities to foster a STEM-educated workforce that ensures Idaho's continued economic prosperity. Visit STEM.Idaho.gov for more information.

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