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Murtaugh youths win Western Idaho 3D-printing competition

MERIDIAN, Idaho (April 9, 2019) — A team from Murtaugh Schools won first place in the Idaho STEM Action Center's 2019 Western Idaho FabSLAM Showcase March 9 at West Ada School District headquarters in Meridian.

The FabSLAM Showcase was the culmination of a project that began in October 2018 when the STEM Action Center trained and equipped coaches from 19 western Idaho schools and libraries to assemble teams to vie in the competition. Each team identified a natural resources problem in their community that could be addressed using 3D printing and digital fabrication and developed and documented a product to help resolve it. The teams presented their solutions to a panel of judges and a public audience for review and feedback.

Murtaugh's first-place team, which designed a solar-powered motion-sensing alarm to keep deer and elk out of fields, also won the Student's Choice Award. The team was comprised of Jeremy Andersen, Kate Merrick, Anthony Moretti, and Dakoda Young and mentored by teachers Eli Andersen and Ashley Moretti. In addition to bragging rights, the students won a 3D printer and a \$200 cash prize for garnering first place and another \$250 for earning student's choice. Visit <http://sites.google.com/murtaugh.k12.id.us/theia-motion-sensor> for details on their project.

Students from Payette School District took second place and won \$300. They designed an array of tools to make wildland firefighters' jobs more efficient. The team included Sofie LeBow, Kellen Parks, Kendyl Parsons, Ethan Skelly, and Colton Smith and was coached by Payette High School science teacher Tyson Smith and librarian Angie Spelman. Visit <http://sites.google.com/s.payetteschools.org/fabslampirateprinters> for details about their project.

A team from Pepper Ridge Elementary School in Boise took third place and earned \$250 for their high-tech birdhouse sporting solar-powered heating and cooling capabilities. The team, coached by Pepper Ridge librarian Cheryl Fife and her husband, Paul, included Sarah Johnson, Paige Kreizenbeck, Grant Mangan, Sasha Redetzky, Kelsi Talley, and Weston Walker. Visit www.westada.org/Page/63187 for details about their project.

Launched by the Digital Harbor Foundation in 2013, FabSLAM is designed to engage youth in identifying, designing, prototyping, testing, and iterating solutions to real-world problems. The Digital Harbor Foundation partnered with the Association of Science-Technology Centers and the Technology Councils of North America to expand the Baltimore program nationwide, with youth from Idaho and Pittsburgh participating since 2016.

According to Dr. Angela Hemingway, executive director of the STEM Action Center, competitions like FabSLAM are important to the future of Idaho, because STEM knowledge and skills are needed for critical and creative thinking, problem solving, innovation, and collaboration.

“Idaho is the fastest-growing state in the U.S., its tech sector is the second fastest-growing in the nation at 6.3 percent, and 80 percent of all jobs will require technology skills within the next 15 years,” Dr. Hemingway said. “Meanwhile, Idaho’s unfilled STEM jobs leaped from 3,800 in 2016 to 6,300 in 2018, which represents nearly \$413 million in lost personal wages and more than \$22 million in lost state tax receipts.”

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 posed to fill them.

The STEM Action Center also hosted Eastern Idaho and Northern Idaho FabSLAM showcases Feb. 23 and March 16 in Pocatello and Coeur d’Alene, respectively. Statewide 42 organizations ranging from schools and libraries to after-school programs — including 225 students and 58 educators and coaches — participated this year.

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 STEM programs, align education and workforce needs, and increase awareness of STEM 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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