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Idaho science fair winners attending virtual international event

BOISE, Idaho (May 15, 2020) — Students earning top honors at the 2020 Idaho Science and Engineering Fairs, which the Idaho STEM Action Center staged in February and March, were originally scheduled to visit Anaheim, Calif., this week to compete at the Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair. However, COVID-19 quashed those plans.

Instead, the Society for Science & the Public is staging a virtual international fair next week. It won't include virtual judging, because a significant percentage of its affiliate science and engineering fairs were not able to hold their events and name finalists. However, the Virtual Regeneron ISEF, slated for May 18-22, will be open to the public instead of just science fair winners and is free.

The virtual science fair features renowned speakers — including top scientists, Nobel Laureates and influential entrepreneurs — focusing on topics ranging from COVID-19 to entrepreneurship to being a woman in STEM.

The STEM Action Center has added Regeneron Virtual ISEF to its STEM@Home offerings at resources.STEM.idaho.gov. The agency launched the information clearinghouse for free science, technology, engineering, and math online learning resources in March as a tool for parents new to homeschooling or just trying to keep young, active minds engaged during social distancing.

This year's Idaho Science and Engineering Fair winners include:

- Pocatello High School junior Rhea Kalivas earned one of two Best in Fair awards at the Eastern Idaho Science and Engineering Fair Feb. 28 for her research project "How Well do Household Disinfectants Kill E.coli Bacteria?"

- Idaho Falls High School sophomore Elias Sanders garnered the other EISEF Best in Fair award for his research project "What is the Most Effective Way to Train an AI?"

- Nicola Medapalli and Jimin Ryu, sophomores at Timberline in Boise, earned one of two Best in Fair awards at the Western Idaho Science and Engineering Fair March 6 for their research project "Constructing a Multi-rotor Compatible Water Sampling Apparatus and Associated Water Quality Analysis System."

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- Nampa Christian senior Tavian Robertson garnered the other WISEF Best in Fair award for his research project "Quarks."

- Kamiah High School junior Cecily Puckett earned one of two Best in Fair awards at the Northern Idaho Science and Engineering Fair March 13 for her research project "Effectiveness of Lavandula Scents on Deterring Odocoileus Virginianus and Cervus Canadensis from Harming Agricultural Crops." She also earned a Best in Fair award at the 2019 Northern Idaho Science and Engineering Fair.

- Fellow Kamiah junior Mya Barger's garnered the other NISEF Best in Fair award for her research project "Comparing the Effectiveness of Two Types of Equine-assisted Therapy on Anxiety and Stress in Humans."

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 increase access to STEM opportunities, align education and workforce needs, and amplify awareness of STEM throughout Idaho. The organization is working with industry, government, educators, and students to develop new resources and support high-quality professional-development opportunities to foster a STEM-educated workforce that ensures Idaho's continued economic prosperity.

Visit STEM.idaho.gov for more information, and visit https://STEM.idaho.gov/support-us/foundation to make a tax-deductible donation to the Idaho STEM Action Center Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, to enhance the investment the state has made in Idaho's STEM community. Contributions provide greater access to STEM camps for children, student competitions, and many other life-shaping programs.

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