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**REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR FOURTH ANNUAL
A.H. NICKLESS INNOVATION AWARD COMPETITION**

Up to \$77,500 in prizes to be awarded to top three local teams and their schools

UNIVERSITY CENTER, MICH., Sept. 6, 2016 – After awarding nearly \$220,000 in scholarships and technology grants to local students and schools in its first three years, the A.H. Nickless Innovation Award is now accepting registrations for the 2016-2017 academic year competition.

The award, presented by the Nickless Family Charitable Foundation, is an annual competition for high school students ages 13 to 18 in Bay, Midland, Saginaw and Tuscola counties. Its goal is to inspire passion for science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subjects and challenge students to work in teams to think innovatively and develop solutions to problems impacting the world in areas such as alternative energy, health care, science, technology and life sciences.

Registration for Phase One of the competition began Sept. 1 and ends Oct. 31. Prospective participants can find more information about the competition, read the rules and regulations, and register online at ahninnovationaward.com.

During Phase One, each team is required to submit a two-page description of its proposed project. In November, regional experts will choose 20 projects to continue in the competition; each of those teams will be granted \$1,000 to develop their projects during Phase Two, which lasts until March 30, 2017. On April 8, 2017, teams will present their projects during a daylong event at Saginaw Valley State University.

Members of the three winning teams will receive scholarships, and each of those teams' schools will win a STEM education grant. Available prizes total \$77,500 annually and are awarded as follows:

- **First place** receives up to five **\$5,000 scholarships** for student team members and a **\$20,000 STEM education grant** for the school
- **Second place** receives up to five **\$2,500 scholarships** for student team members and a **\$10,000 STEM education grant** for the school
- **Third place** receives up to five **\$1,000 scholarships** for student team members and a **\$5,000 STEM education grant** for the school



The competition provides more than just monetary incentives; it gives students valuable hands-on experience that is critical in today's STEM-focused careers. And the competition's founders could not be more pleased with the first three years of results.

"We continue to be amazed by the ideas teams bring forth, from their abstracts to their final presentations," said Judy Graham, who, with her sisters, Joanie Tankersley and Janet Royce, created the award in memory of their father, Arthur H. Nickless. "To see this level of innovation and creativity from high school students across the Great Lakes Bay Region is truly inspiring; it was precisely what we had in mind when we created the A.H. Nickless Innovation Award."

For the 2015-2016 competition, the winning teams and their projects were:

- **First place:** From **Herbert Henry Dow High School in Midland**, Team Leader Varun Shanker and team members Austen Zhu, Satyajit Sarkar, Madison Kent and Andrew Wong, coached by Pamela Kastl, created **a portable device, powered by a variety of energy sources, with the ability to utilize electro dialysis to desalinate saline water**, creating potable water.
- **Second place:** From **Midland High School**, Team Leader Hannah Striebel and team members Natalie Halphen, Max Dykhuizen and Salomé Do, coached by Robert Fox, developed **a mobile application designed to quickly notify registered, vetted potential volunteers who are nearby** in the event of an emergency situation or other short-notice need for volunteers.
- **Third place:** From **Midland High School**, Team Leader Nathaniel Haut and team members Matthew Schafer and William Hackbarth, also coached by Fox, created **a sensor system to detect and assess moisture levels in farm fields**, alert farmers when moisture levels are out of ideal range, and provide recommendations for rectifying the situation.

About the A.H. Nickless Innovation Award

The A.H. Nickless Innovation Award was created by the Nickless Family Charitable Foundation to honor the memory of the late Arthur H. Nickless, a local innovator and owner of Wolverine Telephone Company. With a goal of inspiring passion for science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), the competition is open to high school students in Bay, Midland, Saginaw and Tuscola counties and awards up to \$77,500 per year in scholarships to students and STEM grants to schools. For more information, visit ahninnovationaward.com or facebook.com/AHNicklessInnovationAward.