MEDIA CONTACT: **Dan Attenberger**
                            AGP & Associates, Inc.
                            Phone: 989-839-5800
                            att@agp-inc.com

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Registration now open for sixth 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. 10, 2018 – After awarding $362,000 in scholarships and technology grants to local students and schools in its first five years, the A.H. Nickless Innovation Award is now accepting registrations for the 2018-2019 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. 5 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 late November, a panel of 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 the March 15, 2019, submission deadline. On Saturday, April 6, 2019, teams will present their projects during a daylong public 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

For the 2017-2018 competition, the winning teams and their projects were:

- **First place:** JPEG from **Midland High School:** Team Leader Gwynne Özkan and team members, Jerry Bringard, Preston Millward and Emma Jamrog, coached by Robert Fox, created Campus PASS (Personal Automated Security Software), a smartphone/smartwatch app to help improve safety on college campuses by allowing users to either passively or actively alert campus police when there is an attack or an unsafe situation. The app, which is intended to be used by students walking across college campuses after sunset, asks users to confirm their safety at regular intervals during their travels. If the user fails to confirm his or her safety in a timely manner, campus police will be notified immediately. The app also contains a panic button with which users can summon campus police in an unsafe situation.

- **Second place:** Fire Falcons from **Freeland High School:** Team Leader Emerson Ross and team members Liam Pan, Matthew Rogers, Nathan Miller and Lucas Walker, coached by Thomas Short, developed "a storable and easily transportable air delivery system to aid an individual to safely escape from a burning building. The device will supply individuals with compressed, clean air to provide them more time to exit the dangerous environment," according to the team's project abstract.

- **Third place:** Thermal Sensor Energy Conservation from **Midland High School:** Team Leader Henry Kessler and team members Zach Servinski, Allison Gray and Corinne Dunsmore, also coached by Fox, aimed to curb lighting-related energy waste via thermal sensors that are compatible with the most efficient light bulbs and "will prevent lights from wasting electricity by checking the room for a human while the lights are on. If the lights are on, but no human is present, the lights will shut off," according to the team's project abstract.

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.