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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

**Local students, schools win \$71.5K in scholarships, STEM grants in fifth annual A.H. Nickless Innovation Award competition**

***Five-year total of scholarships, grants awarded reaches \$362,000***

**UNIVERSITY CENTER, MICH., April 24, 2018** – A total of 13 teams of students representing six local schools presented months of research and hard work over the weekend in an annual competition that promotes innovation and creative thinking among high school students in the Great Lakes Bay Region.

Following the finale event for the fifth annual [A.H. Nickless Innovation Award](#) competition – which took place April 21 at Saginaw Valley State University’s Alan W. Ott Auditorium – three teams of students went home with a total of \$36,500 in scholarships for themselves and \$35,000 in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) grants for their sponsoring schools. Each winning team also receives a custom plaque.

Winning teams were:

- **First place:** JPEG, Midland High School  
**Prizes:** \$5,000 scholarship per team member and a \$20,000 STEM grant for the school
- **Second place:** Fire Falcons, Freeland High School  
**Prizes:** \$2,500 scholarship per team member and a \$10,000 STEM grant for the school
- **Third place:** Thermal Sensor Energy Conservation, Midland High School  
**Prizes:** \$1,000 scholarship per team member and a \$5,000 STEM grant for the school

Other schools represented in the top 13 teams included Bullock Creek High School, Herbert Henry Dow High School, Saginaw Arts and Sciences Academy, and the Saginaw Career Complex.

Additional information regarding the top three 2017-18 teams and their projects follows.



### **First place: JPEG, 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.

In addition to the scholarships, grant and plaque, the first-place team members took home a 3-D-printed traveling trophy to showcase at their school for the next year.

### **Second place: Fire Falcons, 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, 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**

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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](http://ahninnovationaward.com) or [facebook.com/AHNicklessInnovationAward](https://facebook.com/AHNicklessInnovationAward).