



MEDIA CONTACT:

Dan Attenberger

AGP & Associates, Inc.

Phone: 989-839-5800

att@agp-inc.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Registration now open for ninth annual A.H. Nickless
Innovation Award competition**

Competition resuming for 2021-22; up to \$77,500 in prizes to be awarded to top three local teams and their schools

UNIVERSITY CENTER, MICH., Sept. 8, 2021 – After awarding nearly \$520,000 in scholarships and grants to local students and schools in its first eight years – including more than \$16,000 in scholarships to past participants when the competition was canceled for 2020-21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic – the A.H. Nickless Innovation Award is now accepting registrations for the 2021-22 academic year competition.

Aimed at inspiring passion for science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subjects and challenging students to work in teams to think innovatively and develop solutions to problems impacting the world, the award is an annual competition for high school students ages 13 to 18 in Bay, Midland, Saginaw and Tuscola counties. Topics typically include – but are not limited to – issues related to alternative energy, healthcare, science, technology or life sciences.

Registration for Phase One of the competition began Sept. 1 and ends Oct. 29. 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 identify a problem and 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 with which to conduct its research and develop a viable solution during Phase Two, which lasts until the March 31, 2022, project submission deadline. On Saturday, April 23, 2022, 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

While the competition was put on hold for 2020-21, the Nickless Family Charitable Foundation **distributed \$16,500 in scholarships to past competitors** who were unable to compete during their senior year due to the cancellation. A \$1,500 scholarship was awarded to each of the 11 class of 2021 seniors who had competed in 2019-20 as juniors but were not on one of the top 3 teams. The foundation also donated **some of the dollars that would have been used to fund the 2020-21 competition to support a program at the Bay City Unit of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Great Lakes Bay Region** that provided a supervised, socially distanced remote learning space for elementary students.

For 2019-20, the competition's Phase Two event was conducted via Zoom during the early months of the pandemic. The winning teams and their projects were:

- **First place:** CD-ROM from **Midland High School:** Team Leader Corbin Fleming-Dittenber and team members Andrew Scheffer, Timmy Kipfmiller and Erika Leasher, coached by Robert Fox; the team's project was a meal-planning app to help low-income households save money and reduce food waste.
- **Second place:** Foresight from **Freeland High School:** Team Leader Liam Pan and team members Hana Pan, Britnee Niedzielski and Ashley Harvey, coached by Thomas Short; the team's project was a vision-enhancing electronic device for individuals with low vision.
- **Third place:** SunSafe from **Saginaw Arts and Sciences Academy:** Team Leader Bhanu Mamillapalli and team members Pratham Patel, Malhar Amin, Shiloh Maliskey and Brendan Fosgitt, coached by Matthew Miller; the team's project was a skin cancer prevention device that alerts users about dangerous UV exposure levels.

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.