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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

**SECOND ANNUAL A.H. NICKLESS INNOVATION AWARD COMPETITION  
REGISTRATION TO OPEN SEPT. 1**

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

**UNIVERSITY CENTER, MICH., Aug. 27, 2014** – In April, three Great Lakes Bay Region teams received nearly \$75,000 in scholarships and technology grants during the inaugural A.H. Nickless Innovation Award Competition. Teachers, coaches and students are already gearing up for the second annual competition, with registration opening Sept. 1.

The competition, presented by the Nickless Family Charitable Foundation, is an annual award for high school students ages 13 to 18 in Bay, Midland, Saginaw and Tuscola counties. The goal of the competition 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 the first phase of the competition begins Sept. 1 and ends Oct. 31. Teams can find more information about the competition, read the rules and regulations, and register online at [ahninnovationaward.com](http://ahninnovationaward.com).

During the first phase, each team is required to submit a two-page description of its proposed project. Regional experts will choose the top 20 projects to continue in the competition, and those teams will each be granted \$1,000 to develop their respective projects.

The prizes available to students and schools total \$77,500 annually. Each member of the first-place, second-place and third-place teams will win a scholarship, and each of the three winning teams' schools will win a STEM education improvement grant. The prize money is divided among the winning teams as follows:

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



- **Third place** receives up to five **\$1,000 scholarships** for students 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.

“Doing research from beginning to end really taught me a lot of what to expect throughout high school and then in college,” said H.H. Dow High School student Varun Shanker, a member of the competition's winning team for 2013-2014. “It gave me a passion for research and taught me the different trials and tribulations you stumble upon.”

“This competition is not just about math and science, but the big picture – including finance, marketing and especially creativity,” said Judy Graham, who, with her sisters, Joanie Tankersley and Janet Royce, created the award in memory of their father, Arthur H. Nickless. “Although we want to focus on the importance of STEM skills, we are looking for teams that have members with all kinds of strengths. We want this competition to help students prepare for the world that's waiting for them. And that means learning how to be flexible and adapt to evolving problems.”

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