



12th annual A.H. Nickless Innovation Award begins, with a share of up to \$77,500 in scholarships and grants at stake

During Phase One of high school STEM competition, students register, form teams and submit project proposals for consideration

UNIVERSITY CENTER, MICH., Sept. 12, 2024 – After awarding more than \$700,000 in scholarships and grants to local students and schools in its first 11 years, the A.H. Nickless Innovation Award competition officially has kicked off for the 2024-25 academic year.

Seeking to inspire passion for science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subjects and challenge students to work in teams, 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. Teams' project topics typically include – but are not limited to – alternative energy, healthcare, science, technology and life sciences.

Phase One of the competition began earlier this month and ends at 4 p.m. EDT Oct. 31. Prospective participants can find more information about the competition, read the rules and regulations, download the abstract template, and register at ahninnovationaward.com.

During Phase One, students register for the competition and form teams; each team is required to identify a problem and submit a two-page abstract describing its proposed project. By late November, a panel of regional experts will choose up to 20 teams to continue in the competition. Each team that advances 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, 2025, project submission deadline. On Saturday, April 26, 2025, the 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 receive 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.



2023-24 competition recap

For 2023-24, [the winning teams, which earned a combined total of \\$57,000 in scholarships for the student team members and STEM education grants for their schools](#), were:

- **First place: Find My Firefighter, Nouvel Catholic Central High School, Saginaw (Catholic Diocese of Saginaw):** Team Leader Riley Mattheis and teammate Sydney Leslie, coached by teacher Clara Wagner, created a GPS tracking device that gives precise location of a firefighter so they can be found more quickly to reduce serious injuries.
- **Second place: CyberAI, Midland High School (Midland Public Schools):** Team Leader Jacob Rudisel and team members Isla McCubbin-Green, Rori McCubbin-Green and Grace Riddle, coached by teacher Robert Fox, created real-time call-monitoring software with artificial intelligence to protect users from scam callers.
- **Third place: The STEMatic Duo, John Glenn High School, Bay City (Bangor Township Schools):** Team Leader Emma Dabrowski and teammate Madalyn Hughes, coached by teacher Shawn Maison, created a clothing kit to ease the chemotherapy process for pediatric cancer patients, including a sweatshirt-blanket, an eye mask and non-slip socks.

Other schools represented in the 2023-24 competition were Bullock Creek High School, Midland (Bullock Creek School District); Herbert Henry Dow High School, Midland (Midland Public Schools); Frankenmuth High School (Frankenmuth School District); Freeland High School (Freeland Community School District); and Saginaw Arts and Sciences Academy (Saginaw Public School District).

Fostering student innovation for more than a decade

The 2024-25 competition marks the 12th year of the A.H. Nickless Innovation Award. Since the first competition in 2013-14, \$701,000 has been awarded to participants and their schools, including \$351,000 in student scholarships and \$350,000 in STEM education grants. In all, more than 500 students have developed and presented a total of more than 170 team projects in Phase Two of the competition during the competition's first 11 years.

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. A total of more than \$700,000 has been awarded since the first competition in 2013-14. For more information, visit ahninnovationaward.com.