

## **WINNING STUDENTS MEET STEM CHALLENGE**

*SMC Business Councils Announces Winners of Williams Fluid Power Challenge for Pennsylvania Small Business Education Fund 2017*



PITTSBURGH, March 31, 2017 – Six teams from five middle schools were awarded with top awards from among 130 middle school students from 17 local schools who participated in the Williams Fluid Power Challenge Competition, hosted by the Pennsylvania Small Business Education Fund, a division of SMC Business Councils.

The winners included:

### **Overall**

1<sup>st</sup> place: Carlynton Middle School  
2<sup>nd</sup> place: Freeport Middle School Team 2  
3<sup>rd</sup> place: Linton Middle School (Penn Hills School District) Team 1

### **Category winners:**

Best Design: Chartiers Valley Middle School Team 1  
Best Teamwork: Independence Middle School (Bethel Park School District) Team 2  
Best Portfolio: Freeport Middle School Team 1

As one of only 18 such competitions across the nation, this event provides seventh and eighth grade students the opportunity to compete as teams using real-life scenarios that apply STEM-related learning, to solve real-world problems and build a machine that solves the challenge given them.

The competition requires students to use math, science, project management and communication to be successful. In addition to financial support, event sponsors such as Williams – a major energy infrastructure company with a regional headquarters in Pittsburgh – provide employee volunteers who lend their engineering and safety expertise to participants, providing advice and guidance, and serving as judges for the competition.

“STEM competitions inspire our youth to pursue careers in related industries,” said David Fair, CEO of SMC Business Councils. “Bringing a competition like the Williams Fluid

Power Challenge to middle school students only increases the interest of students at an earlier age to be curious about STEM careers.”

The Fluid Power Challenge was created by the National Fluid Power Association (NFPA) as a way to introduce fluid power engineering into high schools and middle schools. Student participants compete for trophies in six categories, overall first, second and third place in the competition, along with a design winner, portfolio winner and team work winner.

“Sponsoring the Williams Fluid Power Challenge is part of our commitment to bring real-life application of STEM learning to local students, helping facilitate earlier consideration of the possibilities of STEM-related studies and careers,” said Jim Scheel, senior vice president, Williams Northeast gathering and processing. “With this Challenge being a first of its kind in the United States, like Williams – one of the first and oldest designers, builders and operators of large-scale energy infrastructure – these students truly are pioneers, and we’re glad to help them in every way we can.”

In addition to Williams, this competition is supported by other local companies, including Wojanis Hydraulic Supply Company, Inc., Catalyst Connection, Creekside Springs, St. Moritz Security Services, Mediapost and the Carpenter’s Union Training Center.

#### **About SMC Business Councils**

For more than 70 years, SMC Business Councils has served as the voice of small business and manufacturing in Western Pennsylvania. The SMC membership is made up of manufacturing companies, industrial supply organizations and professional services firms. SMC offers a full range of HR Professional Services, including an in-house insurance agency that currently serves hundreds of companies.

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