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GLOBAL CLEAN ENERGY RACE

Carbon Quest



CEOs on The Ramparts

FROM PEPCO'S RIGBY
TO SMUD'S DISTASIO

- CIO EXODUS
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- THE GREENING OF KANSAS CITY



AN ENERGY CENTRAL PUBLICATION

(GUEST OPINION)

Exciting Youth

PROMOTING ENERGY INNOVATION

BY C. DAVID MYERS

▶ WE MUST BE INNOVATIVE IN OUR APPROACH to igniting fresh ideas that are energy efficient and can transform the power and energy industries.

The Igniting Creative Energy (ICE) Challenge was launched in 2001 with the National Energy Foundation. The ICE Challenge is meant to provide a venue for educating youth about the importance of energy efficiency, encourage youth to explore energy innovation and conservation, and recognize outstanding sustainability-focused actions and ideas of students.

Over the last eight years, more than 13,000 students from 50 states and Canada have demonstrated the creativity of young minds. In the beginning, the ICE Challenge began with four national winners, one elementary, one middle school and one high school student, as well as one teacher. In 2007, we added a state component to recognize the most creative project in each of the 50 states and Canadian provinces.

The projects have been remarkable. One that stands out was from 2007. A fifth grader from Silver Lake, Kan., recycled more than 5,700 pounds of metal and created mulch from grass clippings to save money for college. Her project was a scrapbook that chronicled her efforts. Today, Stacy is still recycling in her hometown and has recycled more than 30,000 pounds already this year

Our program reinforces that sustainability is top of mind for business leaders and students alike. Just as important, it connects companies to future energy leaders and employees.

In May, the 2009 National ICE Winners were announced. Three students – an elementary, middle and high school student – were surprised in their classrooms, in Publishers Clearing House fashion. The students received trips to Washington, where they presented their perspectives on energy efficiency before hundreds of business and political leaders.

Olivia Horne, a fourth-grader from Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla., was named the national elementary school winner for a video she created that highlights how to create an eco-friendly lunch. Maddie Reichman, a sixth-grader from Salt Lake City, was named the national middle school winner for an anti-idling campaign designed to discourage idling your vehicle while waiting. And Suzanne Warren,

a twelfth-grader in Parker, Colo., was the national high school winner for a board game she created called Eco Quest, which helps players keep energy and the environment issues top of mind. All three student projects, along with 14 state winners, impressed judges with their creativity while showcasing that environmental stewardship and energy efficiency have never been more important to students and businesses alike.

As business leaders, we must empower and engage youth on issues that are critical to the future of our industry. I challenge the energy sector to engage students, classrooms, and schools in business. Partnering with associations, as we do with the National Energy Foundation for ICE, is a cost-effective way to do so.

The power and energy industries have the opportunity and the responsibility to protect our children and environment while serving as role models for a new outlook on energy efficiency. Let's make energy education and innovation a priority and further ignite the creative energy in America's youth. ☒

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