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STAR Academy shines in bridge design contest

Pierre, S.D. - Youth from the State Treatment and Rehabilitation (STAR) Academy won top honors, including first place, in the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology (SDSM&T) National Engineering Week Bridge Design contest recently.

STAR Academy youth took home the top three places and fifteen of the top twenty places in the contest. Christopher Paulson of STAR Academy was awarded first place. Karisa Wuestewald and Aaron Rodengen finished second and third respectively.

There were 111 entries in the SDSM&T contest students at STAR Academy, Rapid City Central High School, Rapid City's Southwest Middle School, Stanley County High School, Harding County High School and Lower Brule High School. First prize is \$25 cash and a \$100 scholarship to SDSM&T upon enrollment.

Students were given a piece of cardboard measuring 8 1/2 x 11 inches and asked to construct a bridge using only staples and paper slots. The bridge was required to be at least eight inches in length but no longer than ten inches. The bridge was then tested for durability.

"The youth at STAR Evergreen High School are prepared for the bridge building contest through a week of Bridge Engineering curriculum, including past failures, present projects, and potential future technologies," said Penny Hanna, an instructor at STAR Academy. "Once the youth have some background, they are presented with the materials and guidelines for building their bridge beams. From there, it is all up to them on how they build these as it is a student driven activity."

The STAR Academy is home to the state run juvenile corrections programs near Custer. The STAR Academy is made up of the Intake and Holding Center, Patrick Henry Brady Academy, Living Center and Youth Challenge Center programs for males and the EXCEL and QUEST programs for females.

Note: The students and their parents have authorized the publication of the student's names for purposes of this release and stories you wish to publish or broadcast.