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Lunar Living Special Award Presented to McCracken Middle School Team at Future City National Competition

AIKEN, S.C., May 7, 2021 – For the first time, the Future City Finals Competition went out of this world, challenging middle-school students to design and build a model future city on the moon.

This year's theme encouraged each team to imagine how to make life on the moon not only feasible but optimal—a topic that is pertinent to today's news with NASA engineers currently gathering data from equipment on Mars. Like current engineers, the competitors had to research and determine how best to survive in this hostile environment.

The team's lunar city is set more than 100 years in the future. It has already gone through many years of development. It started as a collection of lunar landers that expanded into an outpost. Gradually, it grew into a village and is now a city. The students must build on this history, describing the new, complete city.

The team representing McCracken Middle School from Spartanburg, South Carolina, took full advantage of this challenge and was rewarded with the "Best Age-Friendly City" award sponsored by AARP.

"I'm pleased that SRNS and the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center can continue to offer these types of STEM-based competitions for students locally and throughout the region. It's often at these events



Team Eagleton from McCracken Middle School, Spartanburg, South Carolina, was rewarded with the "Best Age-Friendly City" award, sponsored by AARP during the finals of this year's Future City Competition where students designed and built a model city for residents of the moon. SRNS Education Outreach Programs and the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center manages the annual regional competition to determine who will represent the state.

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that students discover their future career path even with the difficulties presented by the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Taylor Rice, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) Education Outreach.

“The team’s creativity and ingenuity combined with sound engineering design for this city in such a difficult environment was impressive,” said Jennifer Keiner, seventh grade science teacher, McCracken Middle School. “The three-level, underground model is absolutely amazing.”

Keiner also said that the teams at the international level of the finals are the best of the best, and winning this award affirms the dedication and hard work that went into the project. “It’s quite an accomplishment considering last year, they won Best Rookie Team at the regional competition and, this year, they came back and won the regional competition, earning them the opportunity to compete virtually at the international finals competition,” she added.

McCracken eighth-grader Avery Gilley acknowledged the contributions of his teammates. “Though we may not have won the competition as a whole, receiving an award on the national scale is a huge honor. The award that we got, the Best Age-Friendly City Award, is a testament to the dedication we put into the well-being of our citizens when designing our city, giving them an important place in society, even as they aged, and supporting them when they are no longer able to work.”

The Future City Competition at the regional and final levels covers five deliverables, which requires teams to document their engineering design process and showcase the team’s city of the future. Teams are judged and scored on: The City Essay, City Model slideshow, City Presentation video, Project Plan and their response to judges’ questions.

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, a Fluor-led company with Newport News Nuclear and Honeywell, is responsible for the management and operations of the Department of Energy’s Savannah River Site, including the Savannah River National Laboratory, located near Aiken, South Carolina.

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