



ENVIRONMENT NEWS

City of Tomorrow

Middle school students build a winning, eco-friendly city for the future

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Imagine an eco-conscious city where rooftops have been transformed into fertile, green gardens. It's a place where every home is equipped with a system that recycles valuable water resources. In this town, protecting the planet is a way of life. That's how Abby Sharp, 14, Wyatt Peery, 13, and Tom Krajnak, 14, saw their city of tomorrow. The vision won the eighth-graders from Bexley, Ohio, first prize at the 2009 National Engineers Week Future City Competition.



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This green city of the future was designed by Ohio students Abby Sharp, Wyatt Peery and Tom Krajnak. They named the city Novo Mondum, which means "new world" in Latin.

The annual design competition challenges middle school students to use engineering to tackle issues that affect the earth. This year the competition focused on water conservation.

Participants had to come up with ways to improve water use in the home. Kids from 38 middle schools across the country competed in the finals. The event took place from February 17-18 in Washington, D.C. More than 30,000 students entered the competition.

A Whole New World

Abby, Wyatt and Tom call their winning city Novo Mondum. The name means "new world" in Latin. Novo Mondum sits on the coast of Iceland. The group chose the spot for its wealth of clean energy resources, such as geothermal energy and hydropower. Both sources use the power of nature to generate electricity. Geothermal energy draws heat from deep inside the Earth. Hydropower harnesses energy from flowing water. "Our city is very globally aware," Abby told TFK.

Students team up with a teacher and a volunteer engineer mentor to develop their cities. Each group creates a fictional city on *SimCity 4 Deluxe*, a computer game that allows players to build virtual towns. Then they construct tabletop models of the cities and write essays describing their project. The models must be made using recycled materials and cost no more than \$100 to build.

"Every year we present these kids with really tough engineering issues, and they continually astound us with their knowledge, ideas and solutions for the future," says Bill Knight, Future City National Program Manager.

Future Engineers of America

Organizers hope the competition is a fun way to get kids energized about engineering. It certainly got the winning team thinking about futures in the field. "Engineers are involved in every aspect of building a city," Tom says. "We discovered how necessary they are." Wyatt adds, "The competition taught us how to think on our feet."

The grand-prize winners will receive a trip to U.S. Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama. Competition sponsor Bentley Systems, Inc., will provide classroom sets of engineering software for each of the schools of the top three teams.