

STEM EXPLORATION

Teens test their skills at regional competition



Marcia Moore/The Daily Item

Midd-West High School students work at Friday's STEM competition in Montandon. From left to right are Cole Sauer, Chloe Lantz, Keenan Dietz and Dominick Abate.

Midd-West group moving on to state contest

By Marcia Moore
The Daily Item

MONTANDON — Midd-West High School students are headed to the state STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) competition in May after taking the top spot in a regional showdown Friday at the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit.

Four high school teams, Midd-West, Sunbury Christian Academy, Central Columbia High School and members of the Bloomsburg University Magnet Program, competed for a

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— Matt Dietz, Midd-West STEM advisor

chance to go to the state finals in the spring. Two other schools, Lewisburg and Line Mountain, were unable to attend the competition.

Midd-West STEM advisor Matt Dietz said students Chloe Lantz, Dominick Abate, Cole Sauer and his son, Keenan Dietz, were "stirred up" from last fall's win at the Bloomsburg Fair that netted the team a \$10,000 prize for first place.

"It's nice to see them work so well together in a set time frame. As a father, it's an extra bonus," he said.

For months, all of the student competitors have been working to design and build a prototype of a device able to perform a series of practical tasks and provide a solution to a community problem or improve the lives of Pennsylvanians.

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Students test their skills at regional competition

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The work shown included a helmet designed to prevent concussions and a bridge tester that detects when a structure is deficient.

The Midd-West students presented a device that turns tainted or fracking water into usable water.

Keenan Dietz said he and his teammates have learned to work well with one another over the past several months.

"We're all willing to listen to each other," he said.

One of several judges at the event, Kristen Liberati, an in-school youth workforce specialist at Central Susquehanna Opportunities, said the Snyder County students showed a clear understanding of their project and ability to communicate with one another and to the audience.

"They were very positive and every single person was involved," said Liberati. "It was a really well thought-out and presented project."

The competition also included a 30-minute project that involved giving each of the teams a box filled with the same supplies, including cardboard, paper clips, string, glue and wa-

ter bottles, and a task to build a prototype that could travel the farthest. It's an exercise designed to demonstrate their teamwork, ingenuity, positive attitudes, problem-solving and creativity to the judges.

Most of the students spent the bulk of the time building a vehicle out of the materials.

The Sunbury Christian Academy team of Kennedy Dorman, Seth Kabonick, Bailey Rhodes, Josiah Miller and Colton Long, managed to build the farthest moving prototype by simply rolling a bottle of water off the cardboard ramp.

"Simplest is the best," said Dorman.

The next STEM competition at the CSIU in Montandon will be held March 22 and 23 for students in grades 4-8.

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