

SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
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Press Release

Date: February 16, 2016

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Re: Big Springs Regional Science Fair

Sumter County Students did it again... They swept the Big Spring Regional Science Fair! The 2016 fair brought out the best and brightest middle and high school students to discuss their science research, experimental designs, and interesting conclusions with a host of judges from a variety of professions. Sumter County students joined the competition with students from Marion and Levy Counties.

Fifty-eight eager young researchers from South Sumter Middle, South Sumter High, Wildwood Middle High, and The Villages Charter School brought 48 projects to the Florida National Guard Armory in Ocala on the morning of February 11, 2016. The projects were placed in thirteen different categories ranging from Behavioral and Intelligent Machines to Engineering to Animal Sciences. After two days of judging, the results proved to be very exciting for Sumter County participants!

On the evening of Friday, February 12, science fair participants attended the Awards' Ceremony at the Marion Technical Institute. Of the 48 Sumter County projects competing in the 2016 Big Springs Regional Science Fair, 18 projects earned Blue Ribbons. Seventeen of those awards were in the senior division where high school students compete, and six were in the junior division for middle school students. Sumter earned 16 Red Ribbons between the two categories.

In addition to place awards, students were judged for special awards. Many of these came with cash prizes including the coveted Intel Computer Award of \$200 which went to Kathy Nguyen of The Villages Charter High School for the second year. Sumter County students left the fair with over \$1400 in cash prizes and a host of special opportunity awards which allow them to compete in other venues with most expenses paid including the Orlando Science Center Challenge.

Local businesses and agencies were great supporters of Sumter County students. The Wildwood Rotary Club gave eight \$50 awards to deserving students, while Suncoast Federal Credit Union gave 10 \$50 awards.

To reach the next level of competition, the first place projects were judged in a second round. Based on this finalist judging, a team was selected to compete at the Florida State Science and Engineering Fair to be held in Lakeland, Florida. The 2016 team of 32 projects includes 15 projects representing Sumter County! There were 9 projects from the senior and 6 projects from the junior divisions.

At the Florida State Science and Engineering Fair, the following Sumter County students will once again present their research, experimental designs, data, and conclusions and be interviewed by a host of professionals: from South Sumter High School, Kendall Clark, Luke Mayo, Kyle Coady and the team of Peter Ashley, Amy Ashley and Andrew Ashley; from the Villages Charter School, Isabel Torres, Tiffany Liu, Carlie Taylor, Kathy Nguyen, Kevin Matos, Sabrina Mead, Kayle Cunningham, Matthew Broudeur, Micaela McGrath and Andy Shar; from South Sumter Middle School, Michael Longo and Cheyenne Shirley.

Sumter County School District affiliates with the International Science and Engineering Fair. Through the affiliation, the district is able to send five projects to compete with more than 1500 students from over 50 countries. This year's competition will be held in Phoenix, Arizona in May. Representing Sumter County are: Kendall Clark and Kyle Coady from South Sumter High School; Isabel Torres, Tiffany Liu and Carlie Taylor from The Villages Charter.

The guidance, encouragement, and coaching of the adult sponsors at each school as well as parents must also be recognized. School coordinators this year include Shelly Paulinyce and Kevin Strickland of SSMS, Emily Keeler of SSHS, Monica Vinas and Shelby Wiley of TVCS and Deanna Squire of WMHS. The support from numerous individuals, organizations, and businesses is greatly appreciated. Whether judging, providing food, doing clerical activities, or donating awards, the support is equally appreciated!