



Forty-six high school teams compete for \$95,000 in first-ever New Mexico Governor's STEM Challenge

December 5, 2019

LOS ALAMOS, N.M., Dec. 5, 2019—More than 600 people will convene at Los Lunas High School this Saturday, December 7, for the first-ever New Mexico Governor's STEM Challenge, a competition testing students' ability to use science, technology, engineering, and math to solve real-world problems. Led by the Office of the Governor, the Challenge is a collaboration with the Department of Public Education, the Department of Workforce Solutions, Los Alamos National Laboratory and 18 other STEM employers in the state.

Forty-six student teams from public, private and charter high schools across the state are participating, along with judges from 19 New Mexico STEM employers, plus educators, volunteers and government officials. Each team is composed of 10 students who have made a computer simulation or prototype answering the question posed by Los Alamos National Laboratory, "How can you use science and technology to make the world safer?"

"New Mexico has absolutely unlimited potential," said Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham. "And this competition is an incredible showcase of the ingenuity and passion of so many bright, talented New Mexicans. I'm thrilled and inspired by the work of these students and grateful for their effort. It's a reminder to all: New Mexico's best and brightest are on the cutting edge of the science and technology advancements that will define our shared future."

Though this is the first year for the Governor's STEM Challenge, participation is triple that of initial projections.

The teams will display their prototypes for the judges in the gymnasium at the STEM Challenge. Each of the 19 employers will award a prize of \$5,000, for a total of \$95,000 in prize money. Participating students will also earn a varsity letter from the New Mexico Activities Association.

"The work of these students and their teacher leaders is inspiring," said New Mexico Public Education Secretary Ryan Stewart. "I'm also excited to see high numbers of students from rural communities and female students taking part in the program. Historically, these groups have been underrepresented in STEM career fields. Opportunities like the Governor's Challenge are working to address this gap in representation, and we are thrilled to see the innovation these student groups are bringing to the governor's competition."

“The STEM Challenge’s team-based approach of applying science, engineering, and technology to make the world safer is a microcosm of the work we do at the Laboratory every day,” said Thom Mason, Director of Los Alamos National Laboratory. “Watching teams made of diverse individuals from across the state keeps me optimistic for the Laboratory’s future workforce.”

Judges are from the Air Force Research Laboratory, Boeing, Chevron, Descartes Labs, Deloitte, El Paso Electric, Facebook, Freeport McMoRan Inc., Intel, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Meow Wolf, N3B Los Alamos, Pattern Energy, PNM, Presbyterian Healthcare Services, RS21, Sandia National Laboratories, Urenco and Virgin Galactic.

“These businesses are worldwide leaders in technology and are here to show our students that getting an education doesn’t mean you have to move out of state when you graduate,” said Bill McCamley, New Mexico Cabinet Secretary of Workforce Solutions. “We have plenty of great paying jobs right here in the Land of Enchantment, if you get the right skills.”

Los Alamos National Laboratory provided coordination and support through its Community Partnerships Office, which emphasizes economic development, STEM education, and volunteerism. The LANL Foundation coordinated STEM employer contributions and provided funds for travel and other resources to eligible public-school teams. The Foundation invests in early childhood education, STEM programming and teacher development.

What: New Mexico Governor’s STEM Challenge

Where: Los Lunas High School, 1776 Emilio Lopez Road, Los Lunas, NM

When: Saturday, December 7, 2019

Timeline:

9 am—9:30, Opening Ceremony in auditorium

9:30—noon, Demonstrations & Judging, gymnasium

Noon—1 pm, Lunch and Judging Deliberations

1:30—3:30 pm, Awards Ceremony and Closing Remarks, auditorium

Los Alamos National Laboratory

www.lanl.gov

(505) 667-7000

Los Alamos, NM

Managed by Triad National Security, LLC for the U.S Department of Energy's NNSA

