



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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Future City competition entices students to pursue STEM careers



MWRD staff and commissioners paused during the Future City competition. Pictured (L-R): Terry Maiellaro, Senior Mechanical Engineer; Lou Storino, Principal Civil Engineer; Chairman of Finance Frank Avila; President Kari K. Steele; and Michael Tom, Senior Architect.

Future City competition is a program for students across the country to take concepts and principles discussed in school and translate them into solutions for real world problems. As a STEM-focused activity, (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) these types of extra curricular activities can enhance student awareness and provide the opportunity to learn about available STEM-related career options.

Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) staff are comprised of engineers, IT professionals, microbiologists, accountants and others, and President Kari K. Steele herself is a trained chemist. She was joined at the judges' table by Chairman of Finance Frank Avila and Commissioner Kimberly Du Buclet while staffers Terry Maiellaro, Senior Mechanical Engineer; Lou Storino, Principal Civil Engineer; and Michael Tom, Senior Architect, mentored teams for the annual Future City Competi-



MWRD Senior Architect Michael Tom (second from left) mentored Immaculate Conception School for the second year in a row, assisting the team with model construction and preparing for competition. The team won third place honors. He is pictured with three students along with MWRD President Kari K. Steele (fourth from left) and Chairman of Finance Frank Avila (far right).

tion held at Whitney M. Young Magnet High School in Chicago on January 19.

“I was truly amazed by the level of professionalism these students exhibited at such a young age,” said President Steele. “I enjoy serving as a judge at Future City competitions every year. It’s amazing to see students developing energy-efficient cities to help prepare them to face challenges as our future leaders.”

This year’s theme was “Powering Our Future.” Students were given the opportunity to design cities with simulation software, build scale models, write essays and give oral presentations on their city’s design which would incorporate alternative energy sources. U.S. regional winners will participate in the finals in Washington, DC in February where they will face off against international teams. *(continued)*

Future City competition entices students to pursue STEM careers, *cont.*



Future City coordinator Bob Johnson with MWRD Commissioner Kimberly DuBuclet.

“It’s imperative to engage and encourage students so they have a better understanding of the importance of STEM in their lives,” said Commissioner DuBuclet. “Programs like Future City competition are laying a solid foundation for the next generation of leaders in the science field. These partnership opportunities from the District’s perspective will allow for the investment and development of our future workforce.”



MWRD Chairman of Finance Frank Avila and President Kari K. Steele, on the right, listen to students give an overview of their project at the Future City competition.

“The MWRD congratulates the winning team, St. Paul of the Cross School, which is headed to Washington, DC to compete in the national competition once again,” said Commissioner Avila. “Each year I judge this competition, I’m inspired and impressed by all the student teams’ innovative, resilient, and sustainable city designs. The future is in good hands.”

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Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

Established in 1889, the MWRD (www.mwrd.org) is an award winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.