



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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MWRD Commissioners Frank Avila, Mariyana Spyropoulos and staff support annual Future City Competition



(L-R) MWRD Commissioner Frank Avila, Bob Iverson of HNTB, Derek Boeldt of the Chicago Transit Authority, and Commissioner Mariyana Spyropoulos judge a Future City final round project.

Future City Competition introduces 6th, 7th and 8th grade students nationwide to engineering with SimCity™ software, and Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) Commissioners Frank Avila and Mariyana Spyropoulos, along with six MWRD staff members, volunteered at the Chicago regionals held at the University of Illinois at Chicago campus recently.

The Future City Competition gives students from across the country the opportunity to design cities with simulation software, build scale models, write essays and give oral presentations on their city's design. This was the 28th annual international competition, and this year's theme was "Clean Water: Tap Into Tomorrow." This topic was selected as 2 billion people worldwide – 25% of the world's population – currently don't have access to clean water, and that number is expected to double by 2025.

Edward Jankun, Associate Civil Engineer, Terence



Commissioner Frank Avila (center) with Muhammad University of Islam students who placed fifth in the competition.

Maiellaro, Senior Mechanical Engineer, and Lou Storino, Principal Civil Engineer, participated as preliminary round judges. Their role is to serve as presentation judge for students' diorama model and presentation on the day of the competition. They also have an opportunity to serve as an Essay and Computer Model Judge prior to the event where they review and score essays and Sim City™ computer models.

"MWRD staff participates in the Future City competition to inspire students to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and math. The competition also motivates me and my work to witness student teams brainstorm and conceive innovative solutions for difficult problems that I struggle with like how to ensure future cities have a reliable supply of clean water. I learn a lot from the future leaders of tomorrow," said Commissioner Avila.

Michael Tom, Senior Architect, and Charles Jackson, Senior Civil Engineer, mentored (*continued*)

Commissioners staff support annual Future City Competition, *cont.*



Michael Tom, Senior Architect, with Immaculate Conception School students.

Immaculate Conception School and Queen of All Saints School, respectively. Mentors serve as a resource throughout the program which begins in September and guide the student team in building their model and preparing for the competition. Aruch Poonsapaya, Managing Engineer, coordinated Essay and Computer Model judging and worked behind the scenes checking in judges and tabulating scores during the competition.

Working in a team that includes an educator and STEM mentor, students were asked to identify an urban water system threat and then imagine, research, design, and build a futuristic solution to ensure a reliable supply of clean water. They then prepare their vision of the future through a virtual city design; write a 1,500 word essay; build a scale model of their city with recycled materials; and give a short presentation to a panel of STEM professionals. Regional winners will face off at the finals in Washington, D.C. in Feb-



The first-place winning team from Prairie Junior High School in Alsip is headed to the National Future City Competition in Washington, D.C. next month.

ruary, where they will be joined by a growing roster of international teams, including those from Canada, Egypt and China.

“As an agency that relies on the skills and expertise of employees who have studied STEM curricula, we are proud to have the opportunity to support and participate in Future City,” said Commissioner Spyropoulos. In the U.S., over 40,000 students, representing 1,500 schools, take part in the Future City Competition. One of the nation’s leading engineering education programs and among the most popular, Future City has received national recognition and acclaim for its role in encouraging middle school students to develop their interest in STEM.

For more information about Future City, visit <https://futurecity.org/region/news/2020-illinois-future-city-competition-announces-its-winning-teams>

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Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

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