

# Texas Workforce Press Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Texas Middle and High Schools Showcase Innovative Young Scientists at Texas Science and Engineering Fair**

*21 Austin-area students earned awards at the 29th annual state-level competition*

- Students from Austin, Cedar Park, Dripping Springs, Pflugerville and Round Rock win top prizes.
- For a full list of all Science Fair winners by category and city, please visit: [www.txsef.org/awards](http://www.txsef.org/awards).
- For a downloadable photo gallery of all winners, please visit: [bit.ly/ExxonMobil-SEF2015](http://bit.ly/ExxonMobil-SEF2015).

SAN ANTONIO—More than 1,100 bright young Texans vied for prizes last weekend at the [Texas Science and Engineering Fair](#), a competition that brings together top science fair winners from across the state. The event was hosted by [The University of Texas at San Antonio \(UTSA\)](#) at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, March 26-29. The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) has co-sponsored the competition for 14 consecutive years with the ExxonMobil Foundation.

Two senior division students tied for Best in Show at this year's fair. They were Krithika Iyer, a sophomore at iSchool STEM in Lewisville and Grace Ranft-Garcia, a sophomore at STEM R.A.M. Academy at Lee High School in San Antonio. David Yue, an eighth grader at Rice Middle School in Plano, received the top junior division honor.

"Texas businesses are world-class and rely on an innovative and skilled workforce to help them succeed," said TWC Chairman Andres Alcantar. "I congratulate the winners of this year's regional and statewide competitions and encourage the winners to continue pursuing a STEM education as they explore creative solutions to current and emerging issues."

Texas First Lady Cecilia Abbott addressed the students in the opening ceremonies where she offered encouragement and congratulations to the participating students. Following her remarks, First Lady Abbott toured the science fair, viewing exhibits and visiting with students.

"It was a pleasure to speak to the many talented Texas students participating in the 2015 Texas Science and Engineering Fair and to have the opportunity to view their impressive achievements," said the First Lady. "Governor Abbott and I send our congratulations to all of the student competitors, and the teachers and parents that have nurtured their success. With their help, we will make sure that even the future is bigger in Texas."

Students competed in two divisions—junior (grades six through eight) and senior (grades nine through 12)—in one of 17 categories. In addition to Grand-Prize winners in each division and Best of Show, awards were presented to first- through fifth-place honorees in each category. The fair offered students the opportunity to earn their way to national and international science fairs. Many of the junior division students learned that they will have the opportunity to compete at a Broadcom MASTERS (Math, Applied Science, Technology, and Engineering for Rising Stars) national science fair. Eight of the senior division winners secured a chance to compete at the [Intel International Science and Engineering Fair](#) in Pittsburgh in May.

"This competition is an excellent opportunity for students to explore technical fields and gain valuable experience that will help them advance in education and in a future career in STEM," said TWC Commissioner Representing Labor Ronny Congleton. "We hope this experience will inspire them to continue on this path and be a part of Texas' workforce."

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Winners from the science fair's senior division were awarded a scholarship to attend the Texas Governor's Science and Technology Champions Academy, a weeklong residential summer camp, also sponsored by TWC, which will be held this summer at Texas A&M University. Students qualified to compete in the Texas Science and Engineering Fair by winning Grand Prize or first- through third-place honors at one of 12 regional fairs held across Texas.

"By establishing a solid foundation in STEM while in school, the participants of this competition will contribute to the future of Texas' economic development," said TWC Commissioner Representing Employers Hope Andrade. "We hope these competitions will encourage other students to become the next generation of scientists, inventors and engineers."

For more information on the 2015 ExxonMobil Texas Science and Engineering Fair, visit [emtsef.utsa.edu](http://emtsef.utsa.edu).

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*The Texas Workforce Commission is a state agency dedicated to helping Texas employers, workers and communities prosper economically. For details on TWC and the programs it offers in coordination with its network of local workforce development boards, call 512-463-8942 or visit [www.texasworkforce.org](http://www.texasworkforce.org).*