

Local students receive laptops scholarships from foundation

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By ROB NOVIT Senior writer

The EnergySolutions Foundation presented \$2,000 scholarships to 26 high school sophomores Wednesday.

That focus on younger students interested in math, science and engineering is by design, said Tim Dangerfield, a contractor with the company and a coordinator of the awards program in Aiken.

"There's a lack of engineers in this country," he said. "The EnergySolutions CEO, Steve Creamer, is pushing hard for this. We're certainly trying to encourage these students."

Each student also received a new laptop computer. Seven students are from the Aiken County high schools. Each high school in Richmond and Columbia counties in Georgia had one student winner. Barnwell County has just three high schools, and each had two students receive the awards. The Aiken students are Arik Berning of Aiken High, Sarah Strom of Midland Valley High, Frederick Grimm of North Augusta High, Thomas Yon of Ridge Spring-Monetta High, Jeremy Cadiente of Silver Bluff High, Stuart Nichols of South Aiken High and Derek Shealy of Wagener-Salley High.

The students were evaluated for academic achievement, community involvement and career goals.

Berning has been active with Aiken High's academic and math teams and the French National Honor Society. Strom is sophomore class president and is a member of the Beta Club, varsity tennis team, MathCounts and the student television program.

Grimm has won awards at the Science Olympiad. He's active with the academic team, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, FLBA, Student Council, Spanish Club and the swimming and tennis teams.

At RS-M, Yon is involved with the Beta Club, FFA, baseball, football and FCA. He also is the Student Council treasurer. Cadiente has been active at Silver Bluff with the Student Council, Beta Club and Naval Junior ROTC. Nichols is a member of the South Aiken symphonic and jazz bands, the Aiken Youth Orchestra and is active with volunteer work.

Shealy wants to pursue a career in ecology following his graduation at Wagener-Salley. His activities include the Beta Club, baseball and FFA. Led by co-captain Randy Peterson, the M'Aiken Magic robotics team based at Aiken High, gave a presentation at the awards ceremony.

EnergySolutions, a national company with offices in Aiken and Barnwell, provides an array of services related to management and treatment of nuclear waste.

The company recognizes the overall lack of interest in math, science and engineering careers, said Foundation director Pearl Wright. The need for a skilled workforce led to the scholarships for students who do share interest in those fields, she said.

"You've chosen a hard path," said Wright. "But because you have, you can write your own ticket in years down the road. It's an exciting time in the pursuits that you have chosen."

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