



The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

NEWS RELEASE

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INNOVATIVE PROJECTS FROM UC RIVERSIDE, UCLA, LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY CAPTURE TOP AWARDS AT METROPOLITAN'S ECO INNOVATORS SHOWCASE Competition, in its ninth year, is part of Metropolitan's Spring Green Expo

College student projects aimed at creating a more sustainable future by expanding the use of biogas, reducing groundwater contamination and increasing the safety of treated wastewater claimed the top awards today at Metropolitan Water District's ninth annual ECO Innovators Showcase competition.

The projects created by students from University of California, Riverside, Loma Linda University and University of California, Los Angeles, respectively, were selected from more than two dozen projects from colleges, universities and trade schools that competed in individual and team categories.

The showcase was part of Metropolitan's 11th annual Spring Green Expo, an educational event featuring more than 50 exhibits of sustainable products, services and research by students, businesses, conservation groups and public agencies at Metropolitan's downtown Los Angeles headquarters building.

"With climate change challenging water supplies and ecosystems throughout the West, we are relying on innovative thinking and solutions to ensure we stay on a sustainable path," Metropolitan General Manager Jeffrey Kightlinger said.

"Our colleges and universities are where many of these advancements will germinate. Through the ECO Innovators Showcase, we're looking to inspire and encourage students to apply their academic thought to the real world challenges we face," he said.

UCLA's Victoria Whitener was awarded the top prize in the individual category for her project studying the safety of using treated wastewater for agricultural irrigation in northern Mexico. Her project's goal is to increase the use of recycled water in farming.

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A team from UC Riverside won top honors in the team category for their project designing and installing biogas systems in Costa Rica, which they hope to share with other countries. Through the project, students helped rural families start small pig farms and use the pig waste and biogas systems to produce gas for cooking and fertilizer for farming.

The winner of the ECO Spirit Award, given in memory of longtime Spring Green organizer Nancy Kavin, was Sarah Snyder of Loma Linda University for her project to reduce contamination in community water wells in Chad.

Second place in the team category went to a separate UC Riverside team project to develop a more water-efficient scrubber that reduces ammonia emissions in dairy facilities. Third place was claimed by UC Davis for a solar-powered water treatment system that could be used in rural, underserved communities to treat contaminated water either as it enters homes or as it leaves faucets.

In the individual category, second place honors went to Rae Chye, of the Art Center College of Design, for a project aimed at improving the health of coral reefs, with third place going to Joshua Chang of OTIS College of Art and Design for the design of a green skyscraper that would produce all the energy it uses on-site.

In addition to the schools earning awards, other universities and colleges participating in the ECO Innovators Showcase competition included California State University Bakersfield; California State University Long Beach; California State University, Los Angeles; California State University, Northridge; Cal Poly Pomona; Chapman University; Claremont Graduate University; Los Angeles City College; Loyola Marymount University; Riverside STEM High School; Saddleback College; San Diego State University; and University of Southern California.

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The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is a state-established cooperative of 26 cities and water agencies serving nearly 19 million people in six counties. The district imports water from the Colorado River and Northern California to supplement local supplies, and helps its members to develop increased water conservation, recycling, storage and other resource-management programs.