

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Raytown Students Inspire \$1 Million Robotics Exhibit at Science City, Earn Grand Prize in Burns & McDonnell Battle of the Brains

KANSAS CITY, Missouri — Organizers of Kansas City’s most exciting K-12 competition for science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) presented students from the Raytown Challenge Gifted Program with the grand prize in the [Burns & McDonnell Battle of the Brains](#). The 43-student team’s proposal for a robotics-themed exhibit earned the school \$50,000 in grant money and the opportunity to work with STEM professionals at Burns & McDonnell to transform the idea into a \$1 million exhibit at [Science City](#) at Union Station.

“Automation technologies and artificial intelligence are disrupting every industry and will continue to play an increasing role in the future of our infrastructure,” says Ray Kowalik, chairman and CEO, Burns & McDonnell. “There has never been a more urgent time to encourage students to explore how they can shape the future of technology, and this exhibit envisioned by the Raytown Challenge Gifted Program team will give students an interactive introduction into the world of robotics. Our hope is these exhibits will inspire ‘aha’ moments that will make kids more curious about STEM careers.”

The Raytown Challenge Gifted Program team’s exhibit explores STEM concepts through robotics. Whether it’s vacuuming homes, performing microscopic surgeries, cleaning ocean pollution or voyaging through space, robots help humans perform vital tasks and explore the universe around us. The team’s exhibit will offer hands-on activities for guests to learn about the coding and computer programming required for robots to operate. The exhibit also will dive into elements ranging from mechanical and electrical engineering principles to design systems and structures. The exhibit idea is an engaging discovery of robotics and the STEM principles that propel emerging technologies.

Today, hundreds of students and teachers attended an awards ceremony at Union Station. Burns & McDonnell distributed more than \$155,000 in grant money among the [top 20 finalist teams](#). Each of the finalists received at least \$2,500, with the top five winners receiving the following grant amounts:

- Grand prize: \$50,000 — “Riveting Robotics,” Raytown Challenge Gifted Program, Raytown Quality Schools
- Second place: \$25,000 — “Visible Vibrations,” Oxford Middle School, Blue Valley School District
- Third place: \$20,000 — “Earth Rocks!” Cordill-Mason Elementary, Blue Springs School District
- Fourth place: \$15,000 — “Wacky Waves,” Pleasant Ridge High School, Easton School District
- Fifth place: \$10,000 — “Sports of All Sorts,” Harmony Elementary School, Blue Valley School District

The 20 finalist teams represented the top 2.5% of the exhibit submissions in a year that sparked participation across the metro area:

- 6,400 students
- 240 schools
- 750 proposals
- 50 school districts

Judges, composed of STEM professionals from Burns & McDonnell and Science City, followed a stringent evaluation process to rank entries according to specific criteria, ranging from creativity and inspiration to how interactive and engaging each exhibit could be for visitors. More than 100,000 public votes were cast for the top 20 exhibits, accounting for 30% of the judging.

“Kids across the Greater Kansas City area have inspired many of Science City’s most popular exhibits with their creativity and big ideas,” says George Guastello, president and CEO, Union Station. “The imagination it takes to dream up new ideas is inspiring, and I can’t wait to see the Raytown Challenge students’ robotics-focused exhibit come to life at Science City. It’s rewarding to be in a partnership with Burns & McDonnell that’s changing our community and the future of STEM for the better.”

Half the square footage in Science City’s interactive exhibit space has been designed by students through the Burns & McDonnell Battle of the Brains. The exhibit inspired by the Raytown Challenge Gift Program team’s submission will be the seventh exhibit produced through STEM competition. Launched in 2011 with a goal of sparking greater interest in STEM education and careers, the competition has delivered six interactive exhibits at Science City, valued together at more than \$8 million: [Science of Energy](#), [Genetics: Unlock the Code](#), [Every Last Drop](#), [Simple Machines at Play](#), [The Amazing Brain](#) and [Step Right Up!](#) In addition, Burns & McDonnell has invested in two additional exhibits: [Science on a Sphere](#) and the [Burns & McDonnell Engineerium](#). Over the last 11 years, more than 30,000 metro students have participated in the Burns & McDonnell Battle of the Brain and Burns & McDonnell has distributed \$930,000 in grants directly to top 20 schools.

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About Burns & McDonnell

Burns & McDonnell is a family of companies bringing together an unmatched team of 10,000 engineers, construction and craft professionals, architects, planners, technologists and scientists to design and build our critical infrastructure. With an integrated construction and design mindset, we offer full-service capabilities. Founded in 1898 and working from more than 60 offices globally, Burns & McDonnell is 100% employee-owned. Learn how we are [designed to build](#).

About Science City

Internationally awarded for “Visitor Experience” by ASTC and regionally awarded “Favorite Family Friendly Attraction” by Visit KC Visitors Choice Awards, Science City powered by Burns & McDonnell is named one of the country’s TOP 25 science centers. Annually, it educates and entertains hundreds of thousands of science-thirsty children of all ages, including the very youngest learners in its four new, expansive Early Learning additions. Kansas City’s Science Center is THE place for inquisitive young minds to create, explore, and experiment with the BIG world of science through hands-on learning and non-stop fun. Featuring over 300 interactive exhibits and host to countless STEM-based events — including the annual Greater Kansas City Science & Engineering Fair — Science City leads the region in recognition



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from educators, parents, caregivers AND children alike. Continually evolving and always inventing new ways to make science meaningful and fun, Science City has become THE regional destination for families, groups, special events and even "Science City On The Road" outreach. Union Station Members enjoy Science City visits free of charge. To learn more, please visit ScienceCity.com.