

SA learners participate in US science Olympiad

Three South African learners will participate in the International Sustainable World Energy, Engineering, and Environment Project Olympiad (I-SWEEEP) that kicks off today in the United States, said Eskom.



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I-SWEEEP, which takes place in Houston, is the largest science fair event of its kind in the world with this specialty.

“The three learners did exceptionally well in the Eskom Expo for Young Scientists International Finals in October 2016 and therefore have the honour of representing South Africa,” said Eskom on Tuesday.

I-SWEEEP promotes engineering inventions and energy efficiency/management discoveries that will nurture environmentally-friendly technology concepts in secondary education.

It also gives learners the opportunity to position themselves as the scientists and engineers of the future.

The pupils who left for the Olympiad on Tuesday hail from different parts of the country and will present their projects at the competition.

Young scientists

Sanele Msizi Hlongwane from Ladysmith, in KwaZulu-Natal, will present his project titled “Propellant Cheapskates”.

The purpose of this project is to determine whether different propellant families used in amateur rockets can be improved so that they can perform nearly as powerful as industrial propellants used in commercial and private rockets.

Cornelis Rautenbach from Pretoria, in Gauteng, will present his project titled “The El Nino Southern Oscillation and rainfall in South Africa”. In South Africa it is a general perception that El Niño seasons are associated with overall droughts, while La Niña seasons are associated with overall wetter conditions.

In the study, this perception was tested by investigating whether the influence of El Niño and La Niña seasons are month and area-dependent instead of being weather-dependent.

Meanwhile, Junho Ko from Cape Town in the Western Cape, will present his project titled “Decreasing Temperature and Retaining Hot Water in Informal Settlements using Plastic Bottles filled with Water”. Millions of people living in South Africa are forced to live in informal settlements, and the heat induced by these "shacks" can cause many heat related problems for the people living in the shacks.

Junho decided to come up with a cheap, easy-to-use solution for this issue.

Parthy Chetty, executive director of the Eskom Expo for Young Scientists, said the competition provides a platform for youth from diverse backgrounds, to demonstrate their ingenuity in trying to solve the world’s most pressing challenges through science and engineering.

“Our future is in their hands, so it’s important and admirable, that companies like Eskom and the Expo for Young Scientists, provide a platform locally to ensure global participation and international competitiveness. We’re very proud of the South African learners who excelled in the Eskom Expo International Science Fair in 2016 and who are now competing in I-SWEEEP,” said Chetty.

The Olympiad will conclude on Monday.

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