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## OCHS takes first in regional science, engineering fair

► **The students take part in the Pittsburgh Regional Science and Engineering Fair.**

Oil City High School science students garnered top honors at the Pittsburgh Regional Science & Engineering Fair on Friday and Saturday at the Carnegie Science Center.

Juniors Matt Walentosky and Alix Holcomb and seniors Nick Kelley and Dani Yeager competed with nearly 300 students in the senior division. The overall event was a record-breaking number of 1,004 contestants from western Pennsylvania and Maryland.

"The students performed incredibly well," said science teacher Tim Spuck

The team took first place in

both the Earth/Space/Environment category — senior division, first place in Engineering/Robotics category — senior division, and first place for the entire senior division. It also took one of three spots at the International Science & Engineering Fair, which will take place May 11-17 in Atlanta.

Walentosky is one of three students to advance to the international event. He will be competing against students from 49 states and 48 countries.

"Matt's research project is on the cataclysmic variable star WZ Sge. He used observations from the Spitzer Space Telescope, Perth Observatory, and lights curves

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## Fair

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from previous studies to better understand the nature of the object and its associated activity," Spuck said.

Walentosky also was awarded a \$12,500 annual scholarship to Allegheny College, and an honorable mention award by the U.S. Army. All expenses for the international competition will also be paid.

Kelley conducted his research on two potential T-Tauri stars in the Witch Head Nebula. He used observations from the Spitzer Space Telescope, the Kitt Peak 0.9 Meter Telescope, and Perth Observatory to conclude that the candidates studied are indeed young sun-like stars in the early stages of development.

His research won him first place out of nearly 300 students competing in the Carnegie Science Award's senior division. He also won the \$300 first place prize in the Earth/Space/Environment category, and a \$50 sponsorship award from the Spectroscopy Society of Pittsburgh.

Kelley will attend the awards banquet for the Spectroscopy Society on April 21, and the awards ceremony for the Carnegie Science Award on May 9, where he will present his research and formally

## Team advances to state competition

The Oil City High School Science Olympiad team, consisting of students in grades 10 to 12, advanced to the state competition for the first time.

The team placed in the following events: Astronomy, Nick Kelley and Matt Walentosky, second place; Five-Star Science, Nick Kelley and Greg Goreczny, fourth place; Health Science, Greg Goreczny and Alix Holcomb, first place; Oceanography, Alix Holo-

comb and Steve Frank, fourth place; Write It Do It, Chelsea Clyde and Mallory McKissick, second place.

Other team members include Greg Garbacz, Nick Heasley, Matt Heath, Matt Schneider, Aron Siegel, Andy Subler, Nick Switzer and Becca Weidle.

Jennifer McGarvie is the head coach and Steve Pikna is the assistant coach.

The state competition will be held April 15 at Juniata College in Huntingdon.

accepting the awards.

Yeager designed and constructed a constellation cube prototype. The invention can be used to assist in the perception of the three-dimensional nature of space. Her work earned a first place prize of \$300 in the Engineering/Robotics — senior division, an Affiliate Sponsor Award from the U.S. Army, and a scholarship to attend NASA's Engineering Summer Program.

Holcomb conducted research on the impact of global temperature on the East Australian Current. She used data shared by Australian scientists, and temperature data from the

National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration to demonstrate increases in global temperature may be associated with a stronger East Australian Current. She won a \$50 sponsorship award from the Pittsburgh Geological Society and a free one-year membership. Holcomb will be attending the upcoming meeting of the Geological Society to present the results of her research.

The students attended the event with Spuck, and collectively had one of the highest student/awards ratios of all schools competing in the regional science fair.