Sikorsky Innovations Announces Winner Of Annual STEM Challenge

Stratford, Connecticut - A team from Danbury High School is the winner of the 2014 annual Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Challenge, Sikorsky Innovations, the technology development organization of Sikorsky Aircraft Corp., announced today. Sikorsky Aircraft is a subsidiary of United Technologies Corp. (NYSE: UTX).

Sikorsky Innovations co-sponsors the competition with Connecticut Corsair, a volunteer organization dedicated to the promotion of education and Connecticut businesses, and Connecticut Innovations, an organization that provides strategic capital and operational insight to emerging high technology companies.

Now in its third year, the STEM Challenge is open to Connecticut high schools to offer local students an opportunity to apply their creative, innovative thinking and classroom learning to technical problems faced in an actual engineering workplace. Student teams are paired with Sikorsky engineers to solve an engineering design challenge. Connecticut Corsair develops the challenge using the historic, official state aircraft of Connecticut, the F4U-4 Corsair. This year's challenge was to redesign the landing gear components on the aircraft.

"Sikorsky is committed to STEM educational programs and awareness, as a way to strengthen the pipeline of students who may become interested in STEM careers in Connecticut," said Dulcy O'Rourke, Sikorsky's Engineering Manager of University Relations. "The program also provides Sikorsky engineers with valuable mentoring experiences, while reinforcing our commitment to innovative thinking."

During the yearlong competition, student teams spend the first part of the school year learning engineering principles in the areas of research and analysis, project planning and management, risk evaluation and trade-study development. The top three teams presented their final designs to a panel of industry and academic professionals at the Student Innovation Expo held May 17 at the Connecticut State Armory in Hartford.

"As an organization, Sikorsky Innovations has a laser focus on solving the toughest challenges in vertical flight," said Chris Van Buiten, Vice President of Sikorsky Innovations. "The annual STEM Challenge provides another opportunity for developing in these students the same kind of 'out-of-the-box' thinking that is the hallmark of a Sikorsky engineer. It's important that we continue to inspire and engage the next generation of innovators."

Students from ten Connecticut high schools competed in the challenge. Amity Regional High School was awarded second place and Ridgefield High School earned a third place award. Members of the winning first place team from Danbury High School are: Jeremy Ancheril, Siri Chillara, Miles D'Ascensio, Hue Ha, Nicholas Hellmann, Ryan Hyatt, Joey Lounsbury, Krista Nicholson, Melissa Paume, Sydney Purdue, Tara Strosser and Jinyuan Wang. They were coached by their teacher, Jameson Parker.

Sikorsky Aircraft Corp., based in Stratford, Connecticut, is a world leader in aircraft design, manufacture and service. United Technologies Corp., based in Hartford, Connecticut, provides a broad range of high-technology products and support services to the aerospace and building systems industries.

Connecticut Innovations (CI) is a quasi-public corporation providing equity, debt and bond financing and other forms of financial assistance to companies in all stages of the business life cycle, from startup to later stage. CI offers its portfolio companies strategic guidance and collaborations with partners in business, finance, education, government and nonprofit sectors. CI's initiatives are designed to grow the state's economic and technology base, and to stimulate business investments and job creation. For more information on CI, visit www.ctinnovations.com

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