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Juan Crespi Middle School Wins Garrett Morgan Competition for Sustainable Transportation

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood addressed students. Mineta Transportation Institute sponsored the event.

San Jose, Calif., April 24, 2013 – Juan Crespi Middle School of El Sobrante CA has won the 13th annual Garrett Morgan Competition for Sustainable Transportation. The team was sponsored by Caltrans District 4 in Oakland CA. Second and third places went to teams from St. John the Baptist School of Costa Mesa CA. They were sponsored by Orange County Transportation Authority of Irvine CA. US Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood addressed the students. The competition is sponsored by the [Mineta Transportation Institute](#) (MTI), a transportation policy research organization affiliated with San Jose (CA) State University.

This year, Secretary LaHood gave insights about careers in the transportation industry before he took questions from the students. Other speakers included US Secretary of Transportation (ret.) Norman Mineta, Caltrans Director Malcolm Dougherty, American Association of State Transportation and Highway Officials CEO Bud Wright, and American Public Transportation Association CEO Michael Melaniphy.

Each year, middle school teams are sponsored by various transportation-related organizations. They learn about sustainable energy, various forms of transportation, and other related topics. Then they create a sustainable transportation project based on what they learned, and they compete by way of a national videoconference. The Garrett Morgan program, named for the African-American inventor of today's traffic light, originated several years ago by former US Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater as a way to introduce young people to transportation careers.

The winning team delivered a presentation on cellulose-based ethanol, earning a \$500 cash prize for their classroom. They will receive their awards at a banquet at San Jose State University on Saturday, June 22.

The second-place team, winning \$300, presented its research on a magnet-powered engine. The third-place team, winning \$200, offered an electric biofuel vehicle. All three teams also will receive plaques.

Other competitors included a team from Tupelo Middle School in Tupelo MS, two teams from Morada Middle School in Stockton CA, and two teams from Eagle Prairie Middle School in Rio Dell CA. Students from Cardozo Senior High School in Washington DC showed a video of the race cars that they build and test on their school track.

“We were very impressed with the performance of all these students,” said Rod Diridon, executive director of MTI. “It was obvious that they put a great deal of work into their projects, that the presentation quality has improved over previous years, and that there was a greater variety of projects this year. The competitors were so intelligent and mature that we had to keep reminding ourselves that these are just 12- and 13-year-old students.”

For more information about the competition, go to
<http://transweb.sjsu.edu/MTIportal/education/GarrettMorgan.html>

ABOUT THE MINETA TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE (MTI):

MTI conducts research, education, and information transfer programs focusing on surface transportation policy and management issues, especially related to transit. MTI was established by Congress in 1991 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act and won national re-designation competitions in 2002, 2006 and 2011. The Institute is funded by Congress through the US DOT Research and Innovative Technology Administration, by the California Legislature through Caltrans, and public and private grants. In 2006 the US Department of Homeland Security selected MTI as a National Transportation Security Center of Excellence. The internationally respected members of the MTI Board of Trustees represent all major surface transportation modes. Visit transweb.sjsu.edu

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