

# NEWS RELEASE

# For Statewide Distribution



Iowa Workforce  
Development

**For Immediate Release**

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**Contact: Jesse Dougherty** (515) 725-5487

communications@iwd.iowa.gov

## Winners of the Statewide “Design Challenge” Announced

Build Iowa’s Future Design Challenge brought together K-12 students from across the state to create innovative projects and connect them to rewarding careers.

DES MOINES, IOWA – Iowa Workforce Development and the Iowa Department of Education today announced the winners of the Build Iowa’s Future Design Challenge, an opportunity for K-12 students to create innovative projects, connect to rewarding careers and compete for up to \$1,000 awards for their schools.

First-place awards of \$1,000 each will be made to the following schools for outstanding submissions by their teams: DeSoto Intermediate in the elementary school division; ADM Middle School (Adel) in the middle school division; and Van Buren County High School (Keosauqua) in the high school division. The list of winners of second-place awards of \$500 each and third-place awards of \$300 each can be found below, along with more details about all the winning teams.

“Congratulations to all the Design Challenge winners for their creative projects,” said Beth Townsend, Executive Director of Iowa Workforce Development. “Connecting what students learn in school to the workplace is critical for the knowledge and skills needed in future careers. Thank you to the Home Builders Association of Iowa for co-hosting the challenge with the Iowa Clearinghouse for Work-Based Learning, and to the challenge financial sponsors - Community Colleges for Iowa, Master Builders of Iowa and Pella Corporation - for their generous support of this fulfilling opportunity.”

“Experiential learning opportunities like the Build Iowa’s Future Design Challenge empower students to apply their knowledge as they problem solve in real-world scenarios,” said Iowa Department of Education Director McKenzie Snow. “We congratulate the innovative Design Challenge student teams for connecting the classroom to the workplace, while exploring multiple pathways to in-demand careers.”

Elementary and middle school students participated in the Design Challenge by constructing a model home using toy plastic construction bricks, wood blocks or other materials, and making the case for why it would be a great place to live. High school students designed a project that could improve their communities. About 200 students across Iowa were involved.

“Iowa’s future looks bright after reviewing the entries, and we were impressed with the creative young minds that participated in the challenge,” said Jay Iverson, Executive Officer of the Home Builders Association of Iowa (HBA of Iowa). “With virtually unlimited opportunities for high-paying careers in the skilled trades, we’re certain that this exercise helped to spark interest in seeing those job opportunities as viable options. Certificate programs, apprenticeships and on-the-job training options are readily available. Our sponsors were champions for the cause as well.”

The Iowa Clearinghouse for Work-Based Learning and HBA of Iowa hosted the challenge to provide a framework for professional authentic project development and resources for schools, including videos about careers in building trades and information about how the challenge aligns with Iowa's K-12 math and science standards.

Learn more about the design challenge and details about all of the winning teams

at: <https://clearinghouse.futurereadyiowa.gov/success-stories/2024-build-iowas-future-design-challenge/>

### Design Challenge Winning Schools

#### K-5

**1st Place** - "Christmas Cabin," **DeSoto Intermediate, ADM Community Schools, Teacher: Ashlee Nichols**

**2nd Place** - "DCES Fourth Grade Future Builders," **Davis County Elementary School, Bloomfield, Davis County Community School District, Teacher: Susan Hazen**

**3rd Place** - "Paradise," **Mount Ayr Elementary School, Mount Ayr Community Schools, Teacher: Dara Greenland**

#### 6-8

**1st Place** - "ADM Middle School," **Adel, ADM Community Schools, Teacher: Jon Markus**

**2nd Place** - "Farm Life," **Van Buren County Middle School, Keosauqua, Van Buren County Community School District, Teacher: Stefany Wells**

**3rd Place** - "Cybervisionaries," **Norway Intermediate, Benton Community School District, Teacher: Emily DeNeve**

#### 9-12

**1st Place** - "Warrior Café," **Van Buren County High School, Keosauqua, Van Buren County Community School District, Teacher: Stefany Wells**

**2nd Place** - "Cancer Screening Advocates," **Linn-Mar High School, Marion, Linn-Mar Community School District, Teacher: Lisa A. Skilang**

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