

Louisiana Students Recognized In National Online GIS Competition

Global Geospatial Institute encourages students to learn GIS skills and how to apply them in real-world situations



Baton Rouge, Jun 22, 2020 ([Issuewire.com](http://www.Issuewire.com)) - Louisiana's middle school and high school students participated in the nationwide [2020 ArcGIS Online Competition](#). The Story Maps from the eighth-grade team, Jonathan Nuygen and Ahmad Zidan (Park Forest Middle School), and high school student, Katherine Winchester (St. Joseph Academy), received the state judges' highest scores. Esri awarded cash prizes to the top five middle and top five high school winners. The top highest scores for the high school and middle school entries from each state continue to the national competition. Due to the effect of COVID-19, Esri did not choose a national winner. Instead, they recognized 16 entries that revealed a specific area of strength, Park Forest Middle Schools' entry was one of those.

The competition, from October 2019 to May of 2020, challenged students to develop their Geographic Information System (GIS) skills by utilizing the Esri™ ArcGIS Online Story Map Application. This incredible opportunity was made possible by the Louisiana State Management Team, a partnership between [LSU Ag Center's, 4-H Youth Development Program](#) and [Global Geospatial Institute](#) (GGI) and by the leading international GIS technology company, [Esri™](#). The students' Story Maps were judged by several Louisiana GIS professionals.

Several GIS professionals and students took advantage of the “Early Mentoring” program offered for the first time this year. “We are so proud of all of the students who participated in this competition,” said GGI’s Director, Fran Harvey. “Each student, and the teachers who supported them, put an incredible amount of work into learning GIS skills and how to apply them in real-world situations. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the interruption of their school year, all should be commended for their efforts.”

Nuygen and Zidan, from Park Forest Middle School, won the competition with their story map titled, “Park Forest Middle Summer Camp Travel”. The Story Map featured geocoding and drive time analysis. Esri called special attention to the strength of this story map because it utilized geographic analysis and incorporated multiple analytical processes. As one team of a three-group project class, Nuygen and Zidan’s Story Map will be incorporated as a Make-a-Group Map to be presented to the school administration justifying the need for summer on Park Forest campus. Winchester, a 9th-grade student at St. Joseph Academy, won with her story map entitled “Fossils in Louisiana”.

“GIS is a quickly expanding technological field with endless applications in almost any industry. That is why we want to encourage local students to seize the opportunity to learn these new GIS applications and submit their entries in ESRI’s annual competition,” said Harvey. “The ArcGIS Online School Competition is a free, annual competition. Any student in middle school or high school in Louisiana can participate. We want to challenge our Louisiana educators for the upcoming 2020-21 school year. Let’s see what we can do together to help more students use GIS to build a better understanding of our world.”

Other Louisiana schools who participated in the competition and who had the highest scoring entries were also awarded cash prizes at the state level. Congratulations to Baton Rouge Magnet High School (Baton Rouge), Lusher Charter School (New Orleans), Park Forest Middle School (Baton Rouge), St. Joseph Academy (Baton Rouge) and Louisiana 4-H Tech Club (Baton Rouge). The various Story Map topics included “Murals and Street Art in Louisiana,” “Positive Effects of COVID-19”, “Louisiana Land Loss,” and “Louisiana Dolphin Standings”. These outstanding students can now bring this technology to others and become Junior Geo Mentors to their peers in their classroom settings.

Students and educators wishing to learn more about GIS and how it can be applied in your school should contact Stephanie Shaffett at adminassistant@gginstitute.org, or call the Institute at 225-939-1091. Interested educators can participate in Online Teacher PD, www.lagisk12.org. For information about our [GIS Entry Level Course and GIS Industry-Based Certification](#), visit our website, www.gginstitute.org.



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