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Civic Engagement-Themed Computer Competition Crowns Winthrop Students Winners

Winthrop University

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Civic Engagement-Themed Computer Competition Crowns Winthrop Students Winners

Quick Facts

- Teams of Winthrop students won first and second place.
- This particular competition's theme was civic engagement.

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA — In 24 hours, you must develop and launch a web, mobile or alternative media website that could help increase civic engagement in the city of Rock Hill and surrounding community.

Can you handle it? Winthrop University and York Technical College computer science and digital information design students can.

Both institutions partnered to host the **24-hour Wired Hack 15.1**, a designing and coding competition, from Jan. 16-17 at The Hive in downtown Rock Hill. Five teams competed, but first and second place went to two teams of students from Winthrop.

These students are:

- **Paige Meinke** (Easley, South Carolina)
- **Zac Gordon** (Winchester, Virginia)
- **Ethan Hanner** (Saint Matthews, South Carolina)
- **Michael Threet** (Beaufort, South Carolina)
- **Tara Slabich** (Fort Mill, South Carolina)
- **Courtney Stokes** (Chapin, South Carolina)
- **Billy Greene** (Rock Hill, South Carolina)
- **Marcus Nesbitt** (Una, South Carolina)

The competition kicked off with a brainstorming and planning session. Later, the students developed databases, websites and/or mobile apps based on that plan. While team members could stop to sleep, rules required that at least one team member remain working and present.

Students presented their designs to the two judges: Vince Simonowicz, IT director with the city of Rock Hill, and Jason Dellaruso, product development manager with Span Enterprises. Winning students received 5 terabyte external hard drives (first place) and 16 GB iPod Nanos (second place).

Andrew Besmer, an assistant professor of computer science at Winthrop, said another competition is in the works. He said the student teams walked away from the competition with more experience providing innovative technology, and more awareness of the community and its needs.

“I was impressed with what all of them worked tirelessly to produce, quite literally,” he said. “It was refreshing to see such a young group of students embrace the idea of helping their community and rise to meet the challenge.”

The competition was funded through a S.C. Department of Commerce Innovation Challenge Grant, which funds activities related to technology talent development and awareness for Knowledge Park.

For more information, contact Besmer at 803/323-4825 or e-mail him at besmera@winthrop.edu.

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