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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Fluid Power Challenge Introduces Local Middle School Students to Specialized Engineering Through a Hands-On, Real-World STEM Experience**

ROBINSON TOWNSHIP, PA (April 12, 2016) - On April 5, more than 120 students from Allegheny County middle schools completed the second segment of a two-part team competition centered on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The Fluid Power Challenge, organized by the Pennsylvania Small Business Education Fund (PSBEF) and held in Robinson Township, Pa., provides middle-schools students an engaging and interactive introduction to fluid power engineering and inspires them to consider careers in related industries.

**The winners of the 2016 Challenge include:**

Portfolio Winner – Chartiers Valley Middle School, Team #2  
Teamwork Winner – Carson Middle School, Team #2  
Design Winner – Saint Alexis Catholic School, Team #2  
Overall Winner, 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – David E. Williams Middle School, Team #2  
Overall Winner, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Carlynton Jr. High  
Overall Champion – Ingomar Middle School, Team #2

Created by the National Fluid Power Association (NFPA), the PSBEF's Fluid Power Challenge is one of only 18 such competitions in the United States.

During the course of six weeks, local middle school students and their advisors use classroom learning to solve real-world problems. Engineering employees from sponsoring companies volunteer as judges, and lend their expertise to participants during the planning and building phases of their fluid power projects.

“For me, tying classroom learning to careers via the Fluid Power Challenge is really exciting,” stated Steve Shivak, President of the Pennsylvania Small Business Education Fund and Challenge organizer. “Seeing their eyes light up as they apply their math and analytical skills to build a functioning machine, and as they gain exposure to possibilities within engineering – that’s the most gratifying part.”

Regional companies also recognize the connection as the Challenge is supported by local companies, foundations and organizations.

“As a nearly 110-year-old company, Williams is a pioneer of designing, building and operating large-scale infrastructure. With this being one of only a handful of fluid power challenge events in the entire country, PSBEF and all of the talented local student participants are also pioneers,” said Jim Scheel, Senior Vice President of Northeast Gathering & Processing at Williams. “Helping bring real-life application of STEM learning to middle school students is key for keeping their minds open to the types of careers available and it deepens Williams’ connection to the community.”

To ensure all schools have the opportunity to participate in the Challenge, companies step up to underwrite the majority of the cost. For the Allegheny County Challenge, the effort is led by Williams, The Grable Foundation, Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board, Wojanis Hydraulic Supply Company, Catalyst Connection and more. Shivak believes there is an appetite to add more locations in the next school year. He says, “As more schools learn about the Challenge, the greater the opportunity to connect STEM learning to rewarding and well-paying careers.”

Attachment: Photos of Challenge Winners and Williams Volunteers

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## **2016 FLUID POWER CHALLENGE WINNING TEAMS** (coincides with press release, PSBEF President Steven Shivak with winning teams)

### **2016 Overall 1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner – Ingomar Middle School – Team #2**



### **2016 Overall 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner – Carlynton Jr. High – Team #1**



**2016 Overall 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Winner – David E. Williams Middle School, Team #2**



**2016 Portfolio Winner – Chartiers Valley Middle School, Team #2**



**2016 Teamwork Winner – Carson Middle School, Team #2**



**2016 Design Winner – Saint Alexis Catholic School, Team #2**



**2016 Williams Volunteers**

