

Trebuchet competition provides fun, educational day for 170 students

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
March 27 2015 10:35 PM



The eighth annual Trebuchet competition appeared to be a fun, yet educational day for 170 students from 11 area high schools at Lewis and Clark Community College on Friday.

Kevin Bodden, coordinator of engineering science at LCCC, said the event at George C. Terry River Bend Arena is meant to encourage students with STEM-related interest with a competition.

Watch the video from the event: [LCCC's 8th Annual Trebuchet Contest](#)

“It is great to compete here and develop engineering skills, research skills, working as a team and designing,” he said. “I encourage more people to come out next year and make it bigger and better.”

STEM refers to the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Trebuchets were designed and used in medieval times as a military engine for hurling heavy objects such as rocks weighing hundreds of pounds. The trebuchet typically consists of a pivoted wooden arm set in motion by the fall of weight and works by using the energy of a raised counterweight to throw a projectile.

Approximately 40 teams of four to five high school students competed with trebuchets they have designed and built using their knowledge of physical science. Instead of rocks, they hurled rubber balls. Each team works for months, using their knowledge in basic principles of physics to plan, design, build and test their trebuchets. They will compete with each other for distance, accuracy and presentation of design.

High schools represented included: Marquette Catholic High School, East Alton-Wood River High School, Southwestern High School, Jersey Community High School, Edwardsville High School, Carrollton High School, Highland High School, Trinity Catholic High School in St. Louis, Duchesne High School in St. Charles, and Incarnate Word Academy in St. Louis.

The contest was one of two programs at Lewis and Clark that was awarded a prestigious grant from the National Science Foundation in 2012. The grant will help Lewis and Clark expand the program over the next several years with the cooperation of other college districts, including SWIC and St. Louis Community College.

Highland’s Lexi Plocher said she and her group had fun all day.

“We learned a lot,” she said.

Jersey’s Trevor Ayres said he thought the trebuchet work helps with understanding the building process and drawing out plans and blueprints.

Jordan Sievers of Jersey said she thought it was a lot of fun to see what everyone else did with the trebuchets.

“It was cool to see the different designs,” she said.

Edwardsville's Colin Kelsey said he learned most about teamwork during the event.

"I learned how to put things together for the competition and how to communicate with your teammates," he said.

Edwardsville's Seth Weshinskey summed up what nearly every student present had to say: "It was really fun."

Bodden said he enjoys most seeing the teams come back every year to compete in the trebuchet.

"I like seeing the teams come back the second year and see what they have learned and that they have fun," he said.



