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These young ladies are competing in one of the subdivisions of the art cetegory on March 27 during the Xtreme Challenge hosted by Seward County Commuity College/Area Techical School. Now in its eighth year, Elkhart High School has won the overall title four years in a row. The competition included 507 high school students from 13 area schools. L&T photo/Chris Linenbroker

• Crusader staff A record-breaking 507 students from 13 area high schools registered to participate in Xtreme Challenge contests on the campus of Seward County Community College/Area Technical School on March 27. Even with the record number of competitors, Elkhart High School continued its dominance and once again won the Overall Award. That meant Elkhart earned first rights to a traveling trophy introduced this year to be displayed in the school earning the most contest ranking points.

“Fourth time’s the charm,” said Elkhart High School student Marissa Wiggins. “We’ve won four years in a row, and I’m a senior, so that means all four of my years.”

Xtreme Challenge is in its eighth year at Seward, and has more than doubled in size from its beginning in 2006 when 250 students attended the competition.

In overall points this year, Meade High School had the second highest number of overall points and Rolla High School was third. Other high schools involved in the competitions included Liberal, Stanton County, Hugoton, Garden City, Satanta and Sublette, plus Booker, Texas; Tyrone, Okla.; Turpin, Okla.; and Balko, Okla.

“We would’ve liked to have won that traveling trophy, but it wasn’t in the cards,” said Rolla sponsor Traci Taylor. Rolla brought 50 students to Xtreme Challenge. “That’s all but 15 of the entire high school,” Taylor said.

A friendly but intense competition has been ongoing between Rolla and Elkhart, as both have been traditionally strong contenders for the Xtreme Challenge overall award.

Elkhart sponsor Terri Houtz said she was “a nervous wreck” waiting for the overall winner to be announced. During the awards presentations, she said she was literally getting goosebumps from the anticipation and excitement of hearing her students’ names announced as winners in the individual contests.

Others who may have been excited about the conclusion of a successful Xtreme Challenge were the two Seward organizers of the 2013 contest, Kim Thomas, business instructor, and Mindy Holder, instructor and coordinator of the Computer Information Systems program at SCCC/ATS.

“I’m very pleased – with the turnout, with the participation from the students, and with our Seward students, too. They were wonderful,” Thomas said. “We had great help today.”

Seward students join instructors and staff from the college to manage the activities and the contests in 16 participating college disciplines. Crusader student journalists recorded many of the activities of the day and a collection of those photos may be seen at Facebook.com/CrusaderNews.

At the awards assembly Wednesday afternoon, KSCB sports announcer and Xtreme Challenge Master of Ceremonies Brock Kappelmann announced the top three winners in each academic area. Seward instructors from each area presented the winners with prizes and Xtreme Challenge medals made by machine tool students at the Technical School.

• Art: First, Rebeka Warner, Elkhart; second, Zaira Torres, Garden City; third, Emily Taylor, Turpin.

• English: First, Grace Hollingsworth, Elkhart; second, Dandi Thomas, Elkhart; third, Alexis Clair, Hugoton.

• Journalism: First, Kenzie Thomason, Elkhart; second, Taylor Cameron, Rolla; third, Efren Rivera, Liberal.

• Drama: First, Meredith Light, Rolla; second Dannah White, Elkhart; third, Marshal Witcher, Elkhart.

• Music: First, Bethany Thompson, Liberal; Clayton Benson, Liberal, and Ashlyn Sklenar, Elkhart.

• Physical education: Top written test, Colten Gollier, Meade; top female, Anna Guerro, Booker; top male, Kyler Telford, Rolla.

• Transportation: First, Ben Weibe, Hugoton; second, Jordan Woodruff, Meade; and third, Dylan

Hanna, Elkhart.

• Manufacturing: First, Aaron Seaman, Hugoton; second, Jayden Garretson, Sublette; third, Grant Sparkman, Elkhart.

• Welding: First, Braydon Wasson, Rolla; Lelan Delissa, Meade; third, Kash Larabee, Meade.

• Agriculture: First, Lance Sandoval, Hugoton; Taylor Oliver, Garden City; and Coleman Kirby, Rolla.

• Cosmetology: First, Kiesha Sanchez, Elkhart; second, Keyah Richardson, Elkhart; third, Jentry Strothman, Elkhart.

• Criminal justice: Chandler Huddleston, Rolla; second, Jaron Rusch, Rolla; third, Karly Clinesmith, Rolla.

• Business: First, Garret Blehm, Meade; second, Jr. Ramirez, Garden City; third, Parker Titus, Hugoton.

• Marketing and management: First, Mackenzie Mosier, Meade; second, Michael Griffith, Balko; third, Jalee Mays, Balko.

• Computer Information Systems: First, Izzy Barca, Elkhart; second, Monica Reza, Rolla; and third, Obie Telford, Rolla.

• Math and science: First, Randy Friesen, Meade; second, Patrick Weaver, Hugoton; and third, Morgan Olvera, Meade.

SCCC/ATS faculty and staff who developed and managed the Xtreme Challenge competitions included Susan Copas and Dustin Farmer for art; Janice Northerns for English; Anita Reed for journalism; Alison Chambers for drama; Magda Silva, music; Alli Lyon and Liz Nosbisch, physical education; Joe Aranki and David Ingle for transportation; Butch Garst and Steve Mertz, manufacturing; Roy Hamey, welding; Sam Rucker, Teddi Winslow and James Choate, agriculture; Denice Paden and Sheila Scheib, cosmetology; Cristy Mulanax, criminal justice; Tanya Dowell and Lisa Kennedy, business; Marcia Hatcher and Kim Thomas, marketing management; Mindy Holder, Rusty Tuman and Janice Williams for Computer Information Systems; and Luke Dowell and Don Hayes, math and science.

This was the first year that Obie Telford of Rolla has placed in a challenge. He won third place in computer science. “It was amazing how fun the instructors were. Everybody was having a good time,” Telford said. He looks forward to next year when he said he is definitely going for a first-place in the Xtreme Challenge.

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