

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Proposal Shines Light on Electromagnetic Waves and Wins Grand Prize in the Burns & McDonnell Battle of the Brains**

KANSAS CITY, Missouri — Waves within the electromagnetic spectrum are used for all sorts of things, from listening to music to taking X-ray pictures and more. These invisible waves sparked the idea for the ElectroMAGNIFICENT! proposal from Delta Woods Middle School students, winner of the grand prize in the 2023-24 Burns & McDonnell [Battle of the Brains](#) competition.

Nearly 300 students and teachers attended an awards ceremony on Tuesday at Union Station where the winning team was announced. Delta Woods' 14-student team earned their school \$50,000 in grant money to use toward STEM education and will have the opportunity to work with professionals at [Burns & McDonnell](#) to transform their proposal into a \$1 million exhibit at Science City at Union Station. The exhibit is set to open in the spring of 2025.

"It was fun to be surrounded by all the excitement here today," said Leslie Duke, chair and CEO of Burns & McDonnell. "Our employee-owners at Burns & Mac are looking forward to working with the winning student team to build out the new exhibit for families throughout the Kansas City region to enjoy."

ElectroMAGNIFICENT! explores STEM concepts by highlighting the everyday applications of the electromagnetic spectrum, from the microwaves that heat our food to cellphone radio waves or gamma rays that support space exploration. The team's proposal included elements such as a laser maze that would show how light interacts with matter, a treasure hunt to reveal the hidden elements of ultraviolet light, how light energy is transferred into heat energy, and how to use a prism to create white light. The exhibit will dive into elements ranging from physics to chemistry and mathematics.

Each of the [top 20 finalist teams](#) earned a share of more than \$150,000 in grant money:

- Grand prize: \$50,000 — Delta Woods Middle School, Blue Springs School District, "ElectroMAGNIFICENT!"
- Second place: \$25,000 — Lawrence Free State High School, Lawrence School District, "Nature's Blueprint: A World of Animal Architects"
- Third place: \$20,000 — Sni-A-Bar Elementary School, Grain Valley School District, "Disaster Strikes"
- Fourth place: \$15,000 — Turner High School, Turner School District, "Unveiling the Spectrum"
- Fifth place: \$10,000 — KCKPS Quest, Kansas City, KS School District, "The Might of Flight"

The 2023-24 competition included more than 6,800 students from 245 schools across 50 school districts throughout the Kansas City region. Judges — STEM professionals from Burns & McDonnell and Science City — followed an evaluation process to rank entries according to specific criteria, ranging from creativity and inspiration to how interactive and engaging the exhibit would be for visitors. Throughout the judging process, ElectroMAGNIFICENT! consistently scored well.

“All of the students’ proposed exhibits were amazing — it was really hard to pick a winner,” said George Guastello, president and CEO of Union Station. “Battle of the Brains is an incredible program that has transformed Science City into a museum full of STEM activities for kids of all ages.”

The Burns & McDonnell Battle of the Brains competition is one of the nation’s most unique K-12 STEM programs, with thousands of students competing to pitch their unique classroom idea for a permanent exhibit at Science City. Student participation has nearly tripled since the first competition in 2011.

Burns & McDonnell has designed and built seven major exhibits that have transformed Science City, or more than half of the nearly 100,000 square feet of the science center’s interactive exhibit space.

### **About Burns & McDonnell**

Burns & McDonnell is a family of companies bringing together an unmatched team of more than 14,500 engineers, construction and craft professionals, architects, planners, technologists, and scientists to design and build our critical infrastructure. With an integrated construction and design mindset, we offer full-service capabilities. Founded in 1898 and working from 75 offices globally, Burns & McDonnell is 100% employee-owned. Learn how we are [designed to build](#).

### **About Science City**

Centrally located in the heart of Kansas City and part of the historic and acclaimed Union Station complex, Science City boasts more than 325 interactive and static exhibits covering nearly 100,000 sq. ft. of inside and outdoor space. Internationally awarded for “Visitor Experience” by ASTC and regionally awarded “Favorite Family Friendly Attraction” by Visit KC Visitors Choice Awards, Science City powered by Burns & McDonnell is named one of the country’s TOP 25 science centers. Annually, it educates and entertains hundreds of thousands of science-thirsty children of all ages. Kansas City’s Science Center is THE place for inquisitive young minds to create, explore, and experiment with the BIG world of science through hands-on learning and non-stop fun. Visit [SCIENCECITY.COM](http://SCIENCECITY.COM) for details.