

Award-Winning Future City Competition

Announces Theme for 2020-21:

Living on the Moon

Alabama Middle Schoolers Set To Take Part As Annual International Competition Goes Virtual For First Time Ever

Huntsville, AL – Jan. 30th, 2021 – The dream of living on the Moon has inspired humanity for eons. Artists, writers, scientists, engineers, futurists and many others have vividly imagined what a thriving city on the lunar surface might look like.

Today, the challenges of sustained lunar living, while immense, are within our grasp to conceive of and plan for. With this goal in mind, the award-winning Future City® Competition, now in its 29th year, announces *Living on the Moon*, the 2020-21 theme for its project-based learning experience for middle schoolers.

Imagine life on the moon at least one hundred years from now, when lunar habitats have already progressed through multiple levels of development. What started as a collection of lunar landers expanded into an outpost, then a village and is now a city. The Future City challenge is to build on this history, describe its location, share its innovative features and provide a detailed description of how the city uses the Moon's unique resources to create a self-sustaining home where humans can live, work and thrive.

During this coming school year, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students from across the country and abroad will be asked to identify and tackle the many daunting challenges that are unique to living on the Moon, including no breathable atmosphere; gravity that is only 1/6 of that on Earth; nights that last for 14 Earth days; constant exposure to solar radiation; and dust that's sharp as glass and gets into every crevice.

Working as a team with an educator and STEM mentor, students present their vision of the future through a 1,500 word city essay; a scale model of their city (built with recycled materials); a project plan to help keep their project on track; a short video presentation, and a live, online Q&A session with a panel of technical judges. Keeping the engineering design process and project management front and center, students are asked to address an authentic, real-world question: *How can we make the world a better place?*

Each year, over **45,000** students, representing **1,500** schools and **50** regions in the US and abroad, take part in the Future City Competition. Teams present their ideas at Regional Competitions in early 2021. Regional winners then face off at the Future City Finals, where they are joined by a growing roster of international teams, including those from Canada and China.

In 2020-21, for the first time ever, the program has been adapted to today's virtual world. Both Alabama's regional finals and the Future City Finals will take place completely online. Alabama's regional final will be held remotely on Saturday January 30, 2021, while the Future City Finals are scheduled for April 2021. The exciting competition culminates with one team taking home the grand prize of a trip to U.S. Space Camp and \$7,500 for their school's STEM program (provided by Finals sponsor Bentley Systems).

"This year is especially exciting for me as the Alabama Regional Coordinator. It is our 20th year hosting Regional Future City Competitions in Alabama. The theme this year is all about the Moon, which is quite significant, because we had a Lunar theme 20 years ago when the NASA/Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville hosted the very first Alabama Regional Future City Competition in their Morris Auditorium in 2001," says Regional Coordinator Sonya Dillard. "As a NASA engineer working on the Human Landing System (HLS) that will take the first woman and the next man to the moon, I am eagerly waiting to see all the new Future City designs and I look forward to seeing the amazing plans our middle school student participants will propose for "Living on the Moon."

"2021 Alabama Future City student teams, who's ready to IMAGINEER a Future City on the Moon, and then VIRTUALLY compete with teams from across Alabama for the honor of representing our great State at the National Future City Competition?" Says Paul Agarwal, Chief Judge for the Alabama Future City Regionals. "In the past, teams have had difficulty raising funds to travel to the Regional Competition. This year it is virtual, so there is literally no excuse for not participating. All Alabama middle schools are highly encouraged to register now online."

The deadline to register for this year's Future City Competition is October 31, 2020. Register today or learn more at www.futurecity.org. Visit our [Facebook](#) page for more information and updates on the Future City® Competition.

Future City has ongoing opportunities for engineering and technical professionals to volunteer in a number of different roles, including team mentors, virtual competition judges, and regional coordinators. For more information about Future City and volunteer opportunities, visit www.futurecity.org.

One of the nation's leading engineering education programs and among the most popular, Future City has received national recognition and acclaim for its role in encouraging middle schoolers to develop their interest in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). In 2017 Future City received a prestigious national award as a leading engineering education program, as it was recognized by [US2020](#) and co-founding sponsors Chevron and Tata Consultancy Services for its achievements and innovations in STEM education and its accessibility to underrepresented youth.

In 2016, the Future City Competition received the 2016 Henry C. Turner Prize for Innovation in Construction, presented by Turner Construction Company and the National Building Museum.

In 2015, Future City was named the grand prize winner in the UL (Underwriters Laboratories Inc.) Innovative Education Award program and received a \$100,000 award. The UL award highlights the essential, urgent and significant value of E-STEM education.

Major funding for the Future City Finals comes from the Bechtel Corporation, Bentley Systems, Inc, NCEES, Shell Oil Company, and DiscoverE. Additional program support provided by NASA, UEF and PMIEF.

About DiscoverE

DiscoverE is leading a growing volunteer movement that inspires and informs present and future generations to discover engineering. Our network of volunteers in the US and abroad is drawn from the DiscoverE coalition of more than 100 professional societies, major corporations and government agencies. Together we meet a vital need: introducing students, parents, and educators to engineering, engaging them in hands-on engineering experiences and making science and math relevant. For more information, visit www.discovere.org.