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Students from Mississippi State University Among 38 Teams to Receive EPA Grants for Innovative Sustainable Projects Since 2004 the competition has funded more than 600 student team projects nationwide – some leading to start-up companies

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ATLANTA – Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded a grant to Mississippi State University (MSU) in Starkville, Miss., through the People, Prosperity and the Planet (P3) program. Nationally the grants were awarded to 38 university student teams for proposed projects to develop new, sustainable products and strategies. Each team will receive up to \$15,000 for their proposals.

"This year's P3 teams have created innovative research projects that tackle some of our most pressing environmental and public health challenges," said Dr. Thomas A. Burke, EPA's Science Advisor and Deputy Assistant Administrator of EPA's Office of Research and Development. "These students have the opportunity to bring their exciting new ideas for innovation in sustainability to life, by expanding their learning experience beyond the classroom."

Led by principal investigator Dr. Veera Gnanaswar Gude, the MSU team will use the grant funds to develop a low-cost desalination process for rural and coastal communities. The team will refine an existing, novel low-temperature thermal desalination system MSU developed which operates under natural vacuum using process waste heat and solar collectors. Use of renewable energy sources, particularly solar, to drive desalination can be a sustainable and affordable approach to reclaim potable water from seawater and brackish waters.

Funding for the P3 competition is divided into two phases. Teams selected for Phase I awards receive grants of up to \$15,000 to fund the development of their projects, which are then showcased at the National Sustainable Design Expo in the spring. Following the Expo, P3 teams compete for Phase II awards of up to \$75,000 to further develop their designs and potentially bring them to the marketplace.

Other grantees include student teams from the following universities:

- Auburn University - Auburn, Ala.
- University of Arkansas - Fayetteville, Ark.
- California State University, Chico - Chico, Calif.
- California State University, Monterey Bay - Seaside, Calif.
- California State University, Sacramento - Sacramento, Calif.
- University of California, Davis - Davis, Calif.
- University of California, Riverside - Riverside, Calif.
- University of California, Santa Cruz - Santa Cruz, Calif.
- Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University - Daytona Beach, Fla.
- University of Central Florida - Orlando, Fla.
- Georgia Institute of Technology - Atlanta, Ga.
- University of Hawaii, Manoa - Honolulu, Hawaii.
- Lewis University - Romeoville, Ill.
- Southern Illinois University - Carbondale, Ill.
- Purdue University - West Lafayette, Ind.
- University of Kansas - Lawrence, Kan.
- Kansas State University - Manhattan, Kan.
- University of Kentucky - Paducah, Ky.
- University of Maryland Eastern Shore - Princess Anne, Md.
- University of Missouri - Columbia, Mo.
- New Jersey Institute of Technology - Newark, N.J.
- Cornell University - Ithaca, N.Y.
- Manhattan College - Bronx, N.Y.
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill - Chapel Hill, N.C.
- University of Cincinnati - Cincinnati, Ohio.
- University of Dayton - Dayton, Ohio.
- North Central State College - Mansfield, Ohio.
- University of Toledo - Toledo, Ohio.
- Antioch College - Yellow Springs, Ohio.
- Lamar University - Beaumont, Texas.

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- Southern Methodist University - Dallas, Texas.
- Texas Southern University - Houston, Texas.
- James Madison University - Harrisonburg, Va.
- Gonzaga University - Spokane, Wash.
- Washington State University - Pullman, Wash.

This year's teams are testing innovative ideas such as repurposing chemical byproducts from the mining industry into new concrete that helps inhibit the corrosion of steel and developing a food waste collection kiosk that will spur food waste to energy production in the local community.

Previous P3 teams have used their sustainable ideas and gone on to start businesses. Lucid Design traces its beginnings back to EPA's first P3 award to the founders' Oberlin College team in 2004. Lucid Design specializes in tracking and analyzing energy consumption and resource use data for clients that include Google and Sony.

In 2011, a P3 team from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University developed a portable, solar powered, water purification system in the form of a backpack. The team went on to launch AquaSolve Ventures to produce backpacks that are capable of purifying an impressive 4,300 gallons of water a day. Yet another P3 success is the startup OneEarth Designs, which specializes in solar powered technology, formed from a 2010 Harvard University P3 team. One Earth Designs' signature product, the SolSource 3-in-1, is a 100 percent solar powered grill that can harness the power of the sun to provide home heating and electricity.

View the P3 winners: <http://www.epa.gov/P3/20152016-p3-grant-recipients>

For more information on the P3 Program, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/P3>

View highlights from the 2015 P3 event: <https://youtu.be/URGEUcDtaMA>

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