

## Outpouring of innovation at Bend event

By Megan Kehoe / *The Bulletin*

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On Monday, Bend Research's fabrication facility overflowed with brilliant ideas to remedy almost every fear imaginable.

"I think this year's contest posed a really good question," said Annie Muske-Dukes-Driggs, a Bend Research employee and Inventerprise judge. "There are a lot of interesting entries this year."

The 20th annual Inventerprise contest challenged students in Central Oregon to solve their greatest fears through innovative inventions. The contest deadline was Friday, with judging taking place this week.

One thousand and eight students in Central Oregon entered a total of 813 projects this year — an increase of about 200 projects from last year. The surge in participation makes the 2011 contest the most popular in the event's history.

All 813 project entries lined tables, hung from walls and crowded corners at Bend Research Monday. Some projects were poster diagrams. Others were eye-catching three-dimensional creations that cried out for attention.

A surfboard that keeps sharks away by emitting an irritating sound. A bacteria killer that fells *E. coli* instantly by bringing food to a temperature of 162 degrees with one zap. A vampire repellent made with a deadly combination of garlic, holy water and pumpkin essence. A full-scale robot that protects its owner during street fights.

The inventions displayed students' ingenuity in the face of their fears.

Fourth-graders provided more entries than any other group, with 238 students competing for a chance to win a T-shirt and an invitation to Bend Research's science night event.



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Bend Research Inc. employees Lori Gleichman, left, and Annie Muske-Dukes-Driggs read about "The Tsunami Saver 2000" Inventerprise project on display at the company fabrication facility in Bend on Monday.



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Bend Research Inc. employees Lori Gleichman, left, and Annie Muske-Dukes-Driggs read about "The Tsunami Saver 2000" Inventerprise project on display at the company fabrication facility in Bend on Monday.

Though the high school level featured the biggest top prize — a cool \$1,000 — only 14 students at that level entered this year.

“Maybe high schoolers just don’t want to admit that they’re scared,” Muske-Dukes-Driggs speculated.

*Wide variety of fears addressed by projects*

Judges will look for creativity and maturity in the winning entries. They’re also looking for originality.

Muske-Dukes-Driggs said the thing that caught her attention the most was the wide variety of fears addressed. She said one third-grader created an invention based on his fear of dropping a lollipop and getting it dirty. At the other end of the spectrum, a student in the same grade came up with a no-poke blood sugar tester because he has diabetes and is afraid of needles.

“I think one of the reasons this year was so popular was because the kids were able to approach it any way they wanted,” Muske-Dukes-Driggs said. “The variety is really staggering.”

Winners of the contest will be announced at the end of this month.

“It’s going to be really difficult to judge,” Muske-Dukes-Driggs said.

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