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San Diego – Smart phone charging stations on Trolleys, next-arrival information technology and the ability to multi-task while riding were a few of the concepts presented by high school seniors to win laptops as part of the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) and Coca-Cola Laptop Scholarship Photo Essay Contest. Students were awarded the laptops and recognized at a ceremony at the 12th & Imperial Transit Center on Thursday, May 12.

The top 40 scoring students from 32 different high schools in San Diego County were awarded HP-ENVY 15.6" touch screen laptop computers. Students were required to ride and take photos of the MTS system (selfies with friends, vehicles, stations, infrastructure, etc.) and submit a 1,000-word essay outlining their experience. The laptop scholarship essay contest is a partnership between MTS, Coca-Cola Refreshments of San Diego and the San Diego County Office of Education.

"Each year, the quality of the essays get better and better. These students are very creative and we had participation from all over the county, from Escondido to San Ysidro. Many of these students are also passengers so they understand the benefits to taking transit," said MTS Board Chairman Harry Mathis. "We appreciate the partnership with Coca-Cola to help make this a great learning experience for the students."

To be eligible to win, students had to be San Diego County residents, enrolled in a San Diego County high school and slated to graduate in spring 2016. Judging criteria for the student essays were based on creativity, grammar, research and critical thinking.

Winners of the 2016 MTS & Coca-Cola Laptop Scholarship Photo Essay Contest are:

Oscar Acosta, e3 Civic High School

Noorhan Albayati, Crawford High School

Shahad Atto, Granite Hills High School

Kellie Brock, West Hills High School

Arianna Camino, Escondido High School

Humberto Castorena, Olympian High School

Christian Contreres, Fallbrook High School

Helen Do, Herbert Hoover High School

Amy Eppert, Hilltop High School

Sahara Estrada Hernandez, Kearny High School

Daniel Riley Hart, Foothills Christian High School

Brianne Herbilla, Mira Mesa High School

Hilda Hernandez, Montgomery High School

Nicholas Hoo, Westview High School

Preauna Hunter, La Jolla High School

Victoria Kempf, Mission Hills High School

Tanner Leslie, The Rock Academy

Sandy Liang, Granite Hills High School

Jorge Adrian Lopez, Sweetwater Union High School

Xena Martinez, San Pasqual High School

Amanda Matheson, Canyon Crest Academy

Charlene Miciano, Montgomery High School

Bilal Mohamed, University City High School

Kara Nepomuceno, Canyon Crest Academy

Leslie Olvera, Mar Vista High School

Jessica Ong, Herbert Hoover High School

Sedona Patterson Smith, San Diego High School

Iain Paul, Granite Hills High School

Katrina Ponce Dick, Grossmont High School

Irene Ramirez, Morse High School

Sarah Sanchez, Academy of Our Lady of Peace

Mabele Sapiki, Crawford High School

Carlos Torres, San Ysidro High School

Michelle Tran, Mount Miguel High School

Ronald Trinh, Mount Miguel High School

Teresa Valle, Garfield High School

Daniel Valoria, Grossmont High School

Luz Villasenor, Grossmont Middle College

Sadie Wager, John Muir High School

Michael Zuazo, Rancho Buena Vista High School

MTS operates 95 bus routes and three Trolley lines on 53 miles of double-tracked railway. Every weekday more than 300,000 passenger trips are taken on MTS bus and Trolley services. MTS set a new record in FY 2015 with 96.7 million riders. For more information on how you can use public transportation and save money, go to www.sdmts.com.

Photo (from L to R): MTS Board Chair Harry Mathis, Cory Holstein, Coca-Cola; Michelle Breier San Diego County Office of Education; winners of the 2016 Laptop Scholarship Photo Essay Contest; Coronado City Councilmember Bill Sandke; and MTS Chief Executive Officer Paul Jablonski

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