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# Students test model bridges at Viewmont Mall

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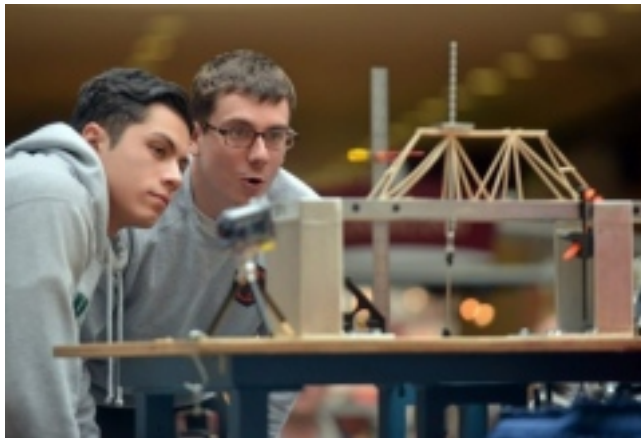
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After all the hours designing and building, each bridge eventually snapped Saturday at the Viewmont Mall.

Thirty-five area high school students tested the strength of their basswood bridges at the Northeast Pennsylvania Regional Bridge Building Competition, hoping to beat their classmates and qualify for a spot in the

international competition.

"You have to have good equilibrium between compression and tension," explained West Scranton High School senior Connor Nee, who built his bridge as part of his physics class.

In the concourse at the mall, after local engineers judged the bridges for their design, students brought the bridges to a table where a weight was attached. The student poured sand into a bucket until the bridge snapped. Efficiency scores were determined by how light the bridge was and how much weight it could hold. Teachers, family members, friends and curious shoppers stopped to watch.

Before competing Saturday, Joshua Stankowski, a Scranton High School senior, received first place in a competition among Scranton High physics students.

"You have to know how to get it really strong without making it heavy," said Joshua, who plans to attend college for bioengineering.

Ken Rupp, the drafting teacher at Valley View High School, brings students to the competition each year. In the last 10 years, two Valley View students have advanced to the international competition. Another one advanced Saturday.

First place went to Parth Bhoiwala of North Pocono, second place was awarded to Zach Shnipes of Valley View and third place went to Dawid Rychek of Pocono Mountain East. Zach also won the award for excellence in architecture.

Both first and second place qualified for the international competition this spring in Chicago.

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