

Iowa Students Win in C-SPAN Competition

Four high school students from Northeast Iowa won top prizes this week in a national competition sponsored by C-SPAN. These teens, from Parkersburg and Cedar Falls, put together winning documentaries about the recovery effort after the 2008 tornado that hit Parkersburg and the cost of education in America.

Matthew Wicks, a junior at Aplington-Parkersburg High School, won a 1st prize, including a \$3,000 award, for his documentary titled “After the Storm.” Three juniors at Cedar Falls High School, Sara Gabriele, Jarek Bakken and Daniel Yehieli, won 2nd prize, including \$1,500, for their video titled “The Price Tag of the American Dream.”

Nationwide, C-SPAN recognized one grand prize winner, two 1st prize winners, eight 2nd prize winners, 16 3rd prize winners and 48 honorable mentions in this year’s competition. There were 1,481 entries total, according to C-SPAN.

I was interviewed online, via Skype, for both of the Iowa documentaries that won. It’s wonderful to see these students gain national recognition and from an organization like C-SPAN, which has enhanced the process of representative government by making government more accessible and accountable. I really enjoyed the opportunity to talk with the students and see their enthusiasm and energy for gaining a better understanding of public policy and its impact on the lives of Americans.

Stay tuned because C-SPAN said it plans to air the top 27 videos from the competition, one a day, starting April 1, at 5:50 am (CT), followed by an interview with the winning student at 7:30 am (CT) on “Washington Journal,” which is C-SPAN’s morning call-in program.

This StudentCam competition is in its seventh year. Middle school and high school students are invited to produce five-to-eight minute documentaries. This year, the topic was “Washington, D.C., through my lens.” Information about all of the winners is at www.c-span.org/studentcam. The winning entries can be viewed there.