ABOUT THE COVER:
Oranges are one of the many fruits grown, picked, processed and sold by Cal Poly students. We continue to improve our orchards — an invaluable part of our Learn by Doing. We are grateful for industry partners such as Wonderful Citrus, which recently partnered with us to plant a new citrus orchard.
Last fall, Cal Poly began the process of mapping out its physical infrastructure needs for the next 20 years. In April, following six months of committee meetings, public hearings and presentations, the university unveiled three conceptual maps illustrating potential future usage of its lands and facilities — its master plan. It was the start of a firestorm.

The professional planners leading the master plan process are skilled experts in leading complex planning efforts. But they are not as familiar with the detailed uses of our lands by students, faculty and staff that embody Cal Poly’s Learn by Doing philosophy. Unfortunately, these conceptual maps took for granted our core mission, prompting the need to quickly gather input and feedback from internal and external constituents.

Our call for input was heard around the world, and we received incredible support. The response was fantastic, and it was reasoned. Our students got involved as well. Agriculture student Joel Leonard organized a group called Students for Agriculture to further support the message of how imperative it is for teaching to have agricultural land close to campus. Both the dean and the president are agriculturalists, so they understand the significance of the activities we conduct on our agricultural lands. They, too, helped clarify that our lands serve as our classrooms and laboratories.

At our June commencement, I was able to announce that the master plan committee had determined that there would be no development on Cal Poly’s agricultural soils in order to preserve the agricultural Learn by Doing heritage for which Cal Poly is best known.

Over the summer, we also developed a common vision for what the Leaning Pine Arboretum could become as part of the college’s plans for the soon-to-be-built Agricultural Events Center and Horse Pavilion. The arboretum by itself is a stunningly beautiful venue for walks and contemplation. As an outdoor venue to complement celebrations, dinners or other activities associated with the event center and pavilion, the arboretum becomes an even more beloved part of campus.

I thank you for your support and input over the past year. I look forward to continuing to work together to enhance our facilities and celebrate our priceless lands.

Pictured is a partial view of the master plan. The beige areas show the updates to the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences. View the plan at masterplan.calpoly.edu/master-plan/#b.

A map of the Leaning Pine Arboretum's different gardens.

New curriculum for the HCS Department

After long and thoughtful discussion, Horticulture and Crop Science (HCS) faculty elected to significantly change the department’s curriculum. Beginning with summer 2015, all prefixes for courses in the department — CRSC, EHS, FRSC, HCS, PPSC, VGSC — were converted to the single prefix of AEPS, a reflection of the Department’s major, agricultural and environmental plant sciences (AEPS).

In addition, the faculty decided to condense the seven concentrations previously offered into three: environmental horticultural science, fruit and crop science and plant protection science.

The faculty believe that these changes not only reflect the needs and trends of California’s agricultural industries but will make it easier for students to understand their curriculum and obtain the classes they need to graduate in four years.

The initial response from students has been very positive and a number of students have indicated that they will be switching to the “new” major. For more information on the new curriculum, the HCS website has been updated and the changes may be viewed at http://aeps.calpoly.edu/aeps_major.html.

A map of the Leaning Pine Arboretum's different gardens.
Students Compete in Olympic-like Event
By Ben Hoover

Cal Poly students placed 24th out of 65 schools in the 2015 National Collegiate Landscape competition held March 12-15. Cal Poly sent a team of eight students, coached by Professor Ben Hoover, to the competition at North Carolina State University. In all, 757 students participated. The Cal Poly team competed in 19 events, with nine top 20 finishes, four top four finishes, and one event win. The Horticulture and Crop Science Department sends students to compete in the national landscape and horticulture event annually. The event includes a career fair, workshops, socials and networking opportunities. The National Association of Landscape Professionals, formerly known as the Professional Landcare Network, organizes the event.

Planning for Mississippi 2016
The 40th annual National Collegiate Landscape Competition will be held at Mississippi State University from March 16-19, 2016, in Starkville, Miss. Available funding and staffing will determine the size of the 2016 Cal Poly team. Five returning students are expected to attend the competition, and additional students will be selected during the fall quarter. The costs associated with the event are registration, travel, lodging, food, and competition supplies. Those wanting to contribute to this Learn by Doing opportunity or learn more about the event, should contact Professor Ben Hoover at 805-756-6358 or email bkhoover@calpoly.edu.

Tackling the State’s $100 Million Problem

Jeannette Rapicavoli, who earned a bachelor’s degree in environmental horticultural science, is a graduate student at UC Riverside working toward a doctorate in plant pathology. Earlier this year, she beat out 50 fellow UC Riverside students to attend the inaugural UC GradSlam, designed to highlight groundbreaking research taking place at the UC campuses, as well as provide fellowships for the top three winning presenters.

Students in the competition had only three minutes to discuss a research topic in an interesting and captivating way. Easy, right? As a GradSlam finalist, Rapicavoli competed against champions from all other UCs. Students from all academic areas were encouraged to participate. Contestants were judged on several categories including clarity and delivery, significance and appeal of the presentation, and whether the student was able to provide context.

Rapicavoli’s topic was “Primed for Battle: Utilizing Microbial Patterns to Strengthen the Plant Immune System.”

“My research focuses specifically on a bacterial pathogen called Xylella fastidiosa, which causes a devastating grapevine disease called Pierce’s disease,” Rapicavoli explained to UCR Today, UC Riverside’s magazine. “This disease affects the multibillion-dollar wine, table, and raisin grape industries, and costs the state of California over $100 million annually in crop losses and efforts to mitigate the disease.”

A total of 10 students presented in the finals. Topics included “How to Talk to Mars” and the winning presentation from UC Irvine, “Stem Cells: How to Mend a Broken Heart.”

Check out Rapicavoli’s presentation at universityofcalifornia.edu/grad-slam.

Alumnus Receives National Award

Adam Ingrao, a graduate of the plant protection science class of 2013, was recently awarded the prestigious National Science Foundation Graduate Research Program Fellowship (NSF). Each year, the NSF selects 2,000 of the nation’s most promising scientists early in their career. This year, Ingrao was one of 31 military veterans to receive the award. The three-year fellowship will pay for his Ph.D. program.

His undergraduate research focused on the feeding behaviors of the mealybug destroyer, a biological control for pest mealybugs, which spurred his interest into the interactions of predators and prey in agroecosystems.

Ingrao’s doctoral research seeks to build on his interest through the investigation of the second and third trophic levels (placement in the food chain) of the asparagus miner (a pest). This research includes pinpointing the chemical ecology of the miner for the development of a lure and trapping system.

“The Cal Poly Horticulture and Crop Science faculty and staff played such a huge role in my trajectory in life. The education I received at Cal Poly is the foundation for my success and served as the catalyst for my pursuit of a Ph.D.”

Ingrao and his wife also own and run a farm in Michigan, Bee Wise Farms, where they raise honeybees and vegetables.

Ultimately, his research will offer Michigan growers biologically driven pest control tools for the miner that can aid in current control efforts.
George Martin grew up in Oakland, Calif., during World War II. In fifth- and sixth grade, more than 40 students were packed into a classroom for half-day sessions. “Classrooms were absolute chaos, and kids’ educations suffered,” said Martin.

His family moved to Greenfield, Calif., where he attended seventh and eighth grade. Because Martin and his family were itinerant, traveling often, he was often segregated with kids from similar families in a separate classroom and received minimal education. Although he did not excel in the classroom, Martin was highly involved in student leadership and was named student body president in the eighth grade.

His family moved to King City, Calif., where he continued to struggle academically. He remained involved in extracurricular activities, serving as captain of the track team during his sophomore, junior and senior years in high school. Martin graduated high school in 1951.

Changing Trajectory
Because of his academic record, Martin was accepted at Cal Poly on a trial admission. He first majored in animal husbandry but later changed his major to vegetable crops.

At Cal Poly, though, he continued to struggle academically. “What took my classmates 30 minutes, took me one to two hours because I was so poorly educated,” said Martin. “I got a D/F on my first English paper. I thought to myself, I can either complain about this or get to work. I got to work.”

At the end of his sophomore year, in 1953, Martin married his high school sweetheart, Patty Martin. Married his high school sweetheart, At the end of his sophomore year, in 1953,

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Life Lessons and Leadership
The job Martin landed was in tree fruits — something he was completely unfamiliar with. “You learn how to learn,” said Martin. “You just spend evenings and weekends catching up on what you don’t know. I have gone through life having the opportunity to be the smartest person in the dumb row or the dumbest person in the smart row. I have always chosen to get in that smart row and just work my way up the best I could.”

His hard work and rapport with colleagues yielded multiple job offers across the nation. The one that interested him the most was with UC Davis. He accepted an associate professor position there in 1967, later becoming a full professor. His position was 90 percent research and 10 percent teaching. For a short stint, he even coached the distance runners team at UC Davis. In fact, Cal Poly Horticulture and Crop Science Department Head Scott Steinmaus was one of the students Martin coached.

Martin’s career at Davis surpassed anything the once-struggling student had ever thought possible. He earned four research awards from the American Society for Horticultural Science and a career award.

Lifelong Learner
Martin retired in 1994. But sitting around is not his forte. He is very active in bicycle mechanics, particularly frame alignment. He’s also written 25 essays outside of his science specialty.

He and Patty have been married 62 years and have two children: Steve, a retired elementary school teacher, and Pam, a retired university basketball coach.

At 82, Martin continues to learn and push himself. He’s reading all the classics and exercises more than two hours a day.

“Success is part self-promotion and part unbridled ambition and the energy and attitude to do the work necessary to do well,” said Martin.

- By Nicole Lyons
Cal Poly Breakthrough Produces U.S. Patent

Can’t eat an apple a day? No worries, Cal Poly has developed a way for you to enjoy fresh-cut fruit longer.

A Cal Poly team has developed an anti-browning formula to prevent enzymatic browning that affects the aesthetic quality of fresh-cut fruits and vegetables. The product also significantly reduces the growth of aerobic bacteria, yeasts and molds.

Cal Poly was granted a U.S. patent for the formula in June and is actively seeking licenses to commercialize it.

Professor Wyatt Brown and his team in the Horticulture and Crop Science Department conducted more than 400 tests over four years to create the formula.

“We believe the formula will enable products to be marketed for a longer period of time and help reduce the incidence of food-borne illness,” Brown said.

The multifunctional formula is an alternative to current anti-browning methods that focus solely on the appearance of food products. In addition, the formula is effective in ambient conditions – special packaging is not required. The anti-browning formula combines calcium ascorbate, calcium propionate and calcium chloride.

When applied to pre-cut Granny Smith and Fuji apples, the formula prevented browning and the growth of aerobic bacteria, yeasts and molds for a minimum of 21 days. It has also proven to be highly effective at preventing the browning of other sliced fruits and vegetables.

Classroom learning: An introduction to beekeeping

Students are hands-on with the bees during the entire course. Students quickly become at ease around the bees, learning to handle combs from the nest, identify the queen, and comfortably manipulate the hive.

Honey bees, as pollinators, are an important component of California agriculture. With more than 880,000 acres of almonds in the state, commercial pollination drives the bee industry today.

Students learn how bees are transported across the nation to pollinate almond blossoms and how to handle the repercussions that stress places on the migratory lifestyle of the colony.

So, to answer the question: how are the bees doing? The bees are doing well, and their numbers are increasing. More importantly, enthusiastic young students are joining the ranks of the beekeepers — bringing with them a passion for learning and innovation that will breathe new life into beekeeping and the science of apiculture.
I grew up in Palestine, on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean. Born and raised in the city, I met agriculture through unvoluntold pruning and fertilizer-spreading “picnics” in my family’s citrus grove in the Jordan Valley. As a boy, I had a love for gardening. My favorite crops were peppers, fava beans, green onions, potatoes, parsley and mint. I had my own irrigation experiments. I dug a 20-foot by two-inch deep ditch, poured water on one end and hoped that some of it would make it to my fava bean plants on the other end. Now that I look back, I could have done some improvements to my system. For some reason, tomatoes and eggplants never worked out for me. I always got small fruit and poor-looking plants. Back then, I attributed that to cat poop. Because of this rich elementary experience, I was inspired to attend a college of agriculture. I earned a bachelor’s degree in plant production and protection from An-Najah National University in Nablus, Palestine in 1995.

I received a scholarship to continue my higher education in France, where I met my wife, Kholoud. In 2002, I joined the International Center of Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas, in Aleppo, Syria, for postdoctoral study. My work focused on improving water-use efficiency for fruit trees. In 2007, I joined the University of Guelph in Canada, to teach and conduct research. I taught courses related to plant science, cereal and forage crop management, crop diagnostics, and cropping systems. I focused my research on nitrogen use efficiency, cereal crop protection, and biomass crops.

My wife and I were excited when I got the job offer from Cal Poly. The landscape and flora on the Central Coast remind me of my childhood. We look forward to one day growing Mediterranean fruit trees and ornamental plants in our backyard.

I am currently teaching Organic Agriculture and Organic Enterprise and will be teaching other courses related to cropping systems. My responsibilities include overseeing Cal Poly’s organic farm. I will soon initiate a research program focused on organic crops. On top of that, my two teenagers have developed a two-page list of things we must do in California.

Professor Wyatt Brown Receives University Award

Professor Wyatt Brown in the Horticulture and Crop Science Department is one of three faculty to receive the University’s Distinguished Scholarship award for the 2014-15 academic year. His research interests center on pre-cut fruits and vegetables, plastics and plastics safety for food use, and modified-atmosphere packaging.

The other recipients are Professor Lars Tomanek, associate professor, Biological Sciences Department, whose research interests center on the ecological physiology of marine organisms, biochemical temperature adaptation, and global climate change; and Philip Costanza, associate professor in the Chemistry and Biochemistry Department, whose research interests focus on polymers and organic synthesis. All three professors were recognized at the 2015 Spring Commencement. Congratulations to Professor Brown and all recipients for this recognition and their accomplishments!

Life after Cal Poly

How Jordan Lonborg landed his dream job among the vines.

By Nicole Lyons

For Massachusetts native Jordan Lonborg, the journey to Cal Poly started with a trip to Costa Rica. He traveled to the tropical paradise to get away, but what the 2012 Cal Poly alum found was his future.

He met a girl who went to Cal Poly. A relationship blossomed between the two of them, and before long, he moved to San Luis Obispo to be near her. Today they are married. Molly Lonborg works at Halter Ranch as an assistant winemaker, while Jordan Lonborg helps manage the 3,600-acres of grapes grown in Monterey County for Monterey Pacific Inc. He jokes that “she makes it and I grow it.”

It seems Lonborg’s path always led to Cal Poly. Lonborg’s father was born and raised in San Luis Obispo and his grandfather, Ray Lonborg, was a professor in the Crop Science Department. Growing up, Lonborg heard many stories from his dad about San Luis Obispo and Cal Poly.

A conversation with a Cal Poly Crop Science student led Lonborg to come to the realization that he wanted to study fruit science. At the age of 24, he transferred from Cuesta College into Cal Poly’s Fruit Science Department to study permanent forms of agriculture.

“I knew what I wanted. I sat in the front row of class and befriended teachers. That’s the secret to my success. Don’t be a number, be a name and a face,” Lonborg said.

Applying textbook lessons

Lonborg inquired about employment opportunities on campus and got a job managing the deciduous orchard, working with Professor Lauren Garner. He helped manage the orchard for about two years.

“I would go to class, then drive over to the orchard and apply what I had learned that day,” said Lonborg. “To be able to walk into the field an hour after class is not something that is available at many schools.”

Senior project proves fruitful

Lonborg was able to apply his senior project, the efficacy of owl boxes in orchards, to his career. While at Cal Poly he built two owl boxes and put them in the deciduous orchard at Cal Poly. At the end of the season, he cleaned out the owl boxes and broke down all the pellets and counted the skulls to determine how many rodents the owls eliminated that year.

Lonborg started an owl box program last year at the vineyards he manages. There are 80 boxes, and just about every box has an owl family in it.

Real-world preparation

Lonborg graduated in 2012 and began working as a viticulturist technician at Monterey Pacific Inc. in Monterey County. Two years later, he accepted his current position as a viticulturist/pest control advisor with the company. The majority of the grapes he works with are contracted out to larger winemaking groups like Delicato, Constellation and Gallo.

He credits landing his dream job to his professors and to Cal Poly for encouraging students to obtain an Agricultural Pest Control Advisor license. In California, it is required to write recommendations for any pesticide that is applied in farming production.

“It’s an amazing feeling to really love what you do. I have the opportunity to put my paperwork down, close the door to the office, and drive out into the vineyard,” said Lonborg. “I can be out there by myself with the insects and the weeds just figuring out solutions. It’s like being a detective to a certain degree. It is really rewarding.”

 Lonborg's grandfather
Reynold Lonborg

Lonborg in Monterey at Loma Del Rio Vineyard, one of the ranches he helps manage, with his partner in crime, Miles Davis

Jordan and Molly Lonborg in his hometown of Scituate, Mass.
The first time I drove onto the university campus, Cal Poly felt special. It’s the place where I fell in love with farming and the idea of Learn by Doing. My parents had a friend who was the Crop Science department head, and we arranged a tour of the campus. At the time, I was planning to major in biology and then go to medical school. We drove from my hometown of Fresno, Calif., to the campus and met with George Gowgani, who encouraged me to enroll in the Crop Science Department. Truth be told, I’d always been curious about farming, and the decision just felt like the right one. I started in fall quarter 1993.

Farming inspired me on different levels; I was fascinated by its scientific nature, interested in the physical work, and delighted by tasting a finished product.

Time in the field
I soon found my passion for agriculture in the orchards at Cal Poly. Farming inspired me on different levels; I was fascinated by its scientific nature, interested in the physical work, and delighted by tasting a finished product. For me, the motto, Learn by Doing soon translated into “Love what you’re doing.”

The citrus and avocado enterprise project began in the fall, and I stayed with it until summer. Dr. Robert McNeil was the advisor for the project and was always available. He could be seen driving from one orchard to the next, his vehicle piled high with documents and other supplies that we needed. There was a lot of responsibility for students in irrigating at the right time and checking orchards regularly. It wasn’t uncommon for McNeil to call saying, “Berry, I turned your water off.” I was prone to overdoing it with irrigation water.

Every Saturday morning we hosted a U-Pick in the citrus orchard. Community members would harvest their own produce and get a taste of the farming lifestyle. We sold our produce at the weekly downtown San Luis Obispo Farmers Market, and it was in those environments where my hands-on understanding of the business of agriculture sprouted. It was a unique perspective, and one that I hadn’t had before: farm to table.

Life after graduation
When I graduated in 1998, I took a different path than many of my classmates who went into production agriculture. Instead, I landed a position at the California State Capitol and began my career in policy and advocacy, where I used my practical understanding of agriculture to staff legislative bills for organizations such as California Citrus Mutual. At 25, I became a lobbyist for the American Farmland Trust. The farm-to-table perspective I experienced at Cal Poly enriched my ability to represent agriculture in the theoretical world of public policy.

One of the largest challenges of doing business in California today is keeping pace with new and ever-changing regulations. I have moved away from representing agriculture in the public arena to consult in water quality. Although we have experienced multiple years of drought, water quality regulation continues to be handed down from federal and state government agencies. It can be time-consuming and expensive for farmers and ranchers to perform all of the requirements to keep operations in compliance. The company I consult for is helping the industry by providing high-quality advice and technical support at a reasonable cost.

The most valuable thing that Cal Poly gave me was a wider perspective. The Learn by Doing approach not only gave me the confidence to realize my goals, but it also prepared me for the workplace. I believe that this approach to learning gave me a wide range of skills that expanded my opportunities and broadened my career path.

Cal Poly taught me that with a plan in place, anything is possible. More importantly, the hands-on learning was instrumental in developing my belief that there are many different ways to solve a problem, and it is okay when the first solution isn’t the best one. And if you’re not doing, then you’re probably not learning.
Couple Donates 450-acre Ranch to Cal Poly

By Jay Thompson

A Santa Maria couple has agreed to donate to Cal Poly a 450-acre avocado and lemon ranch in southern San Luis Obispo County valued at $11.3 million — one of the largest private land donations in the university’s history.

Stuart “Stu” and Jan Bartleson and university officials made the announcement at a press conference held at Bartleson Ranch on Los Berros Road, three miles south of Arroyo Grande.

The donation of a working and income-producing avocado and lemon ranch increases Cal Poly’s agricultural holdings to more than 10,000 acres, including the 6,000 acres adjacent to the San Luis Obispo campus, and the 3,200-acre Swanton Pacific Ranch and 600-acre Valencia property, both in Santa Cruz County.

“We are extremely grateful for this donation and its far-reaching potential for future generations of Cal Poly students,” said President Jeffrey D. Armstrong. “It is through the generosity and foresight of donors like Stu and Jan Bartleson that we are able to continue providing the Learn by Doing educational experience for our students.”

The donation will vastly expand the 11 acres of lemons and 15 acres of avocados already growing on campus. Both crops are used to enhance students’ educational experience. The new ranch has 104 acres of avocados and 131 acres of lemons.

“The Bartlesons’ generosity will enable longer-term research projects, provide numerous internship opportunities for students, and facilitate income-producing industry partnerships for the college,” said Andrew Thulin, dean of the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences. “While the core of our hands-on, Learn by Doing education will still take place on campus, I’m excited about the opportunities this provides for expanding the learning and research programs for our students, faculty and staff.”

Stu Bartleson was thrilled at the possibility of donating the land to Cal Poly.

“It’s exciting to think about this being kept as ag land and carrying our name in perpetuity,” he said. “I’m also excited to think that the ranch will help prepare today’s students to become tomorrow’s ag industry leaders.”

Jan observed that when Stu purchased the land in 1985, it had been used as a feedlot for cattle with only the occasional oak peppering the gently rolling landscape.

“It just makes him feel so good that the avocados and lemons will be able to continue on,” she said. “It’s very important to him that it stay the way it is, and the right place to donate it to is Cal Poly.”

The couple has been major supporters of organizations that provide “vital services and programs” that benefit Santa Maria residents.

Since the 1960s, Stu Bartleson has been a major contributor to service organizations and local nonprofit agencies that benefit area residents. He has also served on the Allan Hancock College Foundation board of directors.

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From left to right: Cal Poly President Jeffrey Armstrong, Jan and Stu Bartleson, and Dean Andrew Thulin.

Bartleson Ranch At a Glance

The donation of Bartleson Ranch to Cal Poly by Stu and Jan Bartleson is valued at $11.3 million. It is the largest private land donation within San Luis Obispo County to Cal Poly in the university’s 114-year history.

The property covers 450 acres of rolling ranchland off Los Berros Road, three miles south of the city of Arroyo Grande.

Stu Bartleson purchased the land in 1985 initially hoping to develop a hotel, 18-hole golf course and subdivision. He planted the first lemon trees to prove the property had water. He also planted Asian pear trees before exclusively committing the land to agriculture and adding thousands of additional lemon and avocado trees.

The ranch includes 131 acres of Lisbon lemons and 104 acres of avocados, which are mostly of the Haas variety.

Bartleson Ranch currently has 18,572 lemon trees and 8,842 avocado trees.
Floral Design Team Makes the Top 10  
By AnnMarie Cornejo

All seven members of the Cal Poly Floral Team placed in the top 10 at the California State Floral Association’s (CSFA) annual competition held Oct. 10-11 in Sacramento.

The winning Cal Poly students included first-place winner Sara Do; Anna Thengvall, who placed fifth; Robin Somogyi, who placed sixth; Kristen Cotter, who placed seventh; Mekayla Karsten, who placed eighth; Dawn Mones, who placed ninth, and Kirsten Smith, who came in 10th.

Students Perform Well in Floral Design Competition  
By AnnMarie Cornejo

Cal Poly’s Floral Design Team took top honors at the American Institute of Floral Designer’s 2015 Symposium held in Denver, Colo.

The Cal Poly team was awarded first place in the Duplicate Arrangement category. Kirsten Smith, an agricultural science senior, placed fourth in the category, individually.

In the Bridal Bouquet competition, Cal Poly placed fourth overall, and Sara Do, an agriculture and environmental plant sciences junior, placed seventh individually.

In the Place Card Table Arrangement category, the Cal Poly team placed eighth.

In overall scoring, Cal Poly placed 10th out of the 14 schools competing.

“The students were able to work alongside professional designers and attend stage shows of designers from all over the nation,” said Melinda Lynch, horticulture and crop science lecturer and the team’s advisor.

The Cal Poly students created their own designs following the competition’s specifications. In addition, the students had to use flowers grown in California and had to complete their designs in 45 minutes.

The students’ second designs were “surprise” packages. “They had only five minutes to review the material and begin designing. Their hard work in preparing for the competition paid off,” Lynch said.