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Luján Announces 2020 Congressional App Challenge Winners

Washington, D.C. – Today, Congressman Ben Ray Luján (D-N.M.), the U.S. House Assistant Speaker, announced that Christopher Mendoza, Zachariah Burch, and Joshua Mari Tamarra, all students from New Mexico's Third Congressional District, are the winners of the 2020 Congressional App Challenge.

Mendoza, Burch, and Mari Tamarra's app, "Solar Age," helps homeowners estimate their annual electricity usage and cost. The usage generated is compared with the annual production of energy from a photovoltaic system to help estimate the cost of a system along with how many years it would take a homeowner to pay off the system.

"While this year has been challenging for many New Mexico students, I am incredibly proud of this year's participants in the Congressional App Challenge. This year's winners worked together to develop an app to help homeowners learn more about their electricity usage and how it affects their pocketbooks," **said Luján.** "I know that their app has the potential to be an important tool for homeowners, and I congratulate this year's winners and honorees on pursuing a STEM education."

"The Congressional App Challenge has prompted STEM Santa Fe to develop an App Development summer camp around it. We are proud to bring together students from Northern NM to work together debating what real-world problems they are interested in solving, and then to guide them with coding tools to develop apps and enter this national competition. Kudos to all our students and teams who entered this competition and in particular the winners in the years of 2019 and 2020," **said STEM Santa Fe Founder and CEO Lina S. Germann, Ph.D., MBA.**

Mendoza, Burch, and Mari Tamarra all attend Capital High School in Santa Fe, N.M.

Luján also announced the second and third place winners in the Congressional App Challenge competition:

- **Second Place:** Academy for Technology and the Classics student Vinaya Kurapati participated in a STEM summer coding camp organized by STEM Santa Fe. Her app, "R3 (Reuse, Reduce, and Recycle)," teaches people about recyclable items in our everyday lives and how to reuse items like plastic bottles and cardboard, as well as allow users to communicate with each other to share ideas on recycling;
- **Third Place**: Santa Fe Girls' School student Ruby Sallah also participated in a STEM summer coding camp organized by STEM Santa Fe. Her app, "Science Sleuths," helps teach kids and young adults about chemistry, biology, and geology in a fun and appealing way.

The Congressional App Challenge is an app creation competition for students of middle and high school age. Student apps were judged on the quality of their ideas, including creativity and originality. Students were encouraged to participate in STEM and computer science events throughout the year, including coding boot camps organized by STEM Santa Fe, a local nonprofit.

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