

**76th Annual
San Luis Valley
Regional Science Fair, Inc.**

Established in 1949

2025 Annual Report

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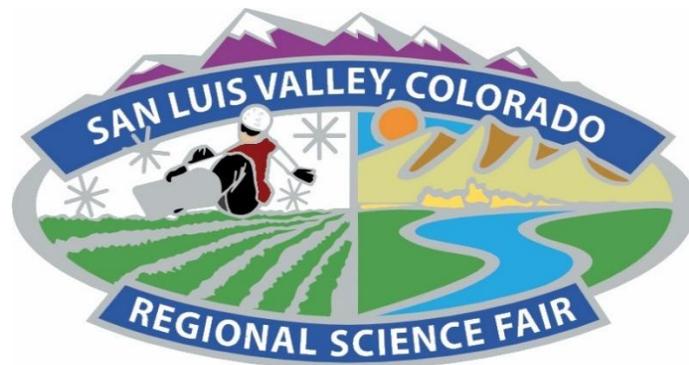
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San Luis Valley Regional Science Fair, Inc.

P.O. Box 1420

2261 Enterprise Drive

Alamosa, CO 81101

(719) 589-5412

Highlights from the 76th Annual San Luis Valley Regional Science Fair - 2025

The 76th Annual San Luis Valley Regional Science Fair (SLVRSF) welcomed a new Fair Director, **Loree' Harvey**, who worked closely with Lucy Adams throughout the year to learn the ropes! Loree' has taught in the Monte Vista school district for 20 years and has a strong background in life sciences, student research and teacher support. Loree' has served on the SLVRSF's Scientific Review Committee (SRC) for several years and is also a member of the Colorado Science and Engineering Fair SRC team. She is excited to take on this new role and add her enthusiasm, energy, and commitment to helping teachers and students with their research endeavors, as well as continuing the incredible legacy of community support that Lucy worked so hard to build over the last 33 years.

Projects by Division and Category - SLVRSF 2025				
Division	Elementary	Junior	Senior	Total
Behavior Sciences	4	10	4	18
Biomedical Sciences	7	10	6	23
Botany	4	13	7	24
Chemistry	15	8	1	24
Consumer Sciences	6	11		17
Earth & Space Sciences	3	2	2	7
Engineering	6	11	8	25
Environmental Sciences	4	8	3	15
Mathematics & Computer Sci	1	1	2	4
Physics	9	9	4	22
Zoology	1	11	6	18
Grand Totals	60	94	43	197

The SLVRSF celebrated its **76th birthday** this year! Two high school students (**Tanner Houser** – Sargent, and **James Little** - Monte Vista) qualified as **Finalists** for the **Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF)** held in Columbus, Ohio this past May. We also honored an outstanding 8th grade student with a trip to ISEF as a **Student Observer** (Lola Sondrol - Monte Vista Online Academy). Additionally, we received a grant from the Society for Science and used the funds to pay for a **Teacher Observer** to attend ISEF (**Lisa Abeyta** – Justice and Heritage Academy) to experience this high level of pre-college research competition with the goal of bringing this valuable information back to her school and students. Our SLV students had an incredible experience meeting and competing against the best high school science students in the world, watching Nobel Laureates share their life stories, learning about college and post-secondary opportunities at the ISEF Career Expo, and visiting sights and museums in the Columbus OH area.

The 2025 SLV Regional Science Fair hosted a total of **219 students** and **197 projects**, from seven high schools, nine middle schools, and seven elementary schools within the San Luis Valley. These students received **over \$30,000** in monetary awards, material awards, scholarships, and all-expense paid trips to ISEF, made possible by the generous donations of our Contributors.

Twenty-six Junior and Senior Division students were awarded the honor of representing the SLVRSF at the **Colorado Science and Engineering Fair (CSEF)**, held in Fort Collins, Colorado in early April of 2025. In total, our Senior Division students placed in three of the Grand Awards categories and received 10 Special Awards or scholarships. Our Junior Division students placed in seven of the Grand Awards categories and received 20 Special Awards.

Additionally, two of our valley teachers received special recognition. **Bryan Eubank** from Creede received the Colorado Association of Science Teachers (CAST) Award, and **Kristi Mathiesen** from Monte Vista received the Doug Steward Memorial Teacher Award.

Our website, **SLVRSF.org**, has been updated and contains links to Teacher and Student resources, our History, our Mission Statement, our Board of Directors, Judge registration, and materials from prior Fairs. We have also resurrected our Facebook and Instagram pages... Please visit our website and click on the links to see the latest posts!

Another great year for the San Luis Valley Regional Science Fair!

Loree' A. Harvey, Fair Director

Top Winners of the 76th Annual SLV Regional Science Fair February 27th & February 28th, 2025

COLORADO SCIENCE & ENGINEERING FAIR (CSEF) FINALISTS:

Senior Division

Madelyn Garberich – Alamosa High School	James Little – Monte Vista High School
Hannah Shelton – Centauri High School	Emilio Ortiz – Monte Vista High School
Westlea Tipsword – Center High School	Maria Sears – Monte Vista High School
Lydia Boyd – Monte Vista High School	Tanner Houser – Sargent High School
Reagan Futrell – Monte Vista High School	Bogar Quezada – Sierra Grande High School
Ernesto Ochoa-Marquez – Monte Vista High School	

Junior Division

Alia Yund – Centauri Middle School	Elly Entz – Sargent Middle School
Paisley Anderson – Creede Middle School	Liam Griffin – Sargent Middle School
Lucy Brittain – Creede Middle School	Lane Mattive – Sargent Middle School
Alex Dicker – Monte Vista Middle School	Kenley Mitchell – Sargent Middle School
Lola Sondrol – Monte Vista OLA Middle School	Addie Paulson – Sargent Middle School
Clara Miller – Sanford Middle School	Khaleesi Reynolds – Sargent Middle School
Elaina Consaul – Sargent Middle School	Maci Widger – Sargent Middle School
Sydney Curtis – Sargent Middle School	

REGENERON INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE & ENGINEERING FAIR (ISEF) FINALISTS:

James Little – Monte Vista High School	Tanner Houser – Sargent High School
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ALTERNATE REGENERON ISEF WINNER:

Reagan Futrell – Monte Vista High School

REGENERON ISEF STUDENT OBSERVER AWARD:

Lola Sondrol – Monte Vista OLA Middle School

TEACHER AWARDS:

The following teachers were chosen to attend the Regeneron ISEF to accompany their students:

Loree' Harvey – Monte Vista High School	Rafe Paulson – Sargent High School
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SCHOOL AWARDS:

The following School Awards are based on Grand Awards received by a school's students:

Small Elementary School	Sierra Grande Elementary
Large Elementary School	Bill Metz Elementary
Small Middle School	Sargent Middle School
Large Middle School	Centauri Middle School
Small High School	Sargent High School
Large High School	Monte Vista High School

76th Annual SLV Regional Science Fair Working Committee Members

Fair Director: Loree' Harvey

The Fair Director is actively involved in all working committees hereto mentioned and is an ex-officio member of the SLV Regional Science Fair Board of Directors.

Awards Ceremony: SLV Regional Science Fair Board of Directors

Joy DiCamillo

Boo Thomas

Diana Jones

Courtney Gooding
(CSEF Director)

Display and Safety: Dr. Curtis Crawford

Finance: SLV Regional Science Fair
Board of Directors

Judging: Diana Jones & Marty Jones

Publishing: Joy DiCamillo

Registration: Loree' Harvey

Room Setup: SLV Regional Science Fair
Board of Directors

ASU Facilities Staff



Scientific Review Committee: Dr. Neil Rigsbee – Chair

Dr. Curtis Crawford

Dr. Jordan Ricard

Dr. Caitlin O'Conner

Devon Davey

Tayler Garcia

Loree' Harvey

Social Media: Marissa Martinez

Website: Loree' Harvey

Notes from 2025 ISEF Participants

“Doing science fair this year has been one of the greatest decisions of my whole life. It's helped me in so many ways and allowed me to grow as a person throughout the entirety of the process. At the beginning of this year, I was always worried about how others saw me and that led me to be afraid of really interacting with others and especially made it hard to do any sort of presentation of any kind. But science fair allowed me to meet with such a large variety of people and allowed me to gain experience in getting out of my comfort zone and interacting with others. It gave me the direction I want to go in the future and helped me achieve an appreciation of how big the world really is. Going to the International Science and Engineering Fair even brought me a good opportunity for my future, a four-year scholarship to Arizona State University, which is incredible and gives me a good direction to head in my future career. I will always appreciate the things that have been given to me this year and the countless opportunities I've been given to both grow as an individual and for my future.”

~ James Little - Junior, Monte Vista High School

“I've only competed in Science Fair three times. The first time, I created a game for blind people, something I built on my own just for fun because I enjoyed programming. Later, I turned it into a science fair project almost as an afterthought and ended up winning 1st place in my category. Since I was only in 5th grade, I couldn't advance to the state level, but the experience stuck with me.

The second time I competed, I tested WiFi strength through different materials. I only did the project because it was required for a grade, and I wasn't interested at all. I rushed through it, didn't put in much effort, and unsurprisingly, didn't win anything. That experience discouraged me from competing again for years.

The third time, I made it to internationals. Through that experience, I realized that success doesn't come from playing it safe or copying what others have done before; in fact, the exact opposite. Success comes from following your curiosity and doing something because you care about it. That's what I did in 5th grade, and it's what I did again this time. I wasn't motivated by winning or grades, I just genuinely wanted to explore something that fascinated me. That mindset is the true difference between success and failure, not just in science fair, but in every aspect of life and my future career.

This experience taught me a broader lesson: going against the grain isn't just rewarding, it's necessary. I've also learned that focusing deeply on one subject you care about is far more impactful than spreading yourself thin across many. ISEF reinforced that belief, and next year, I plan to lean into that even more by pursuing an even bolder, more original project. Science Fair helped me discover my career path. Before my junior year I didn't really know what I wanted to do, but I chose a science fair project that had to do with computer science and I fell in love with it. I decided that computer engineering was what I wanted to do. I was then fortunate enough to be able to go to CSEF and ISEF with this project. Both experiences were incredible, but ISEF really stood out to me. I met so many people from around the world and even met one of last year's winners of STS. I was able to watch a panel with a Nobel Laureate and even had the opportunity to talk with an

astronaut on the International Space Station. This experience has made me push myself to be a better student and engineer.”

~ **Tanner Houser - Junior, Sargent High School**

“The International Science and Engineering Fair has developed a new concept that I am eager to pursue to the fullest extent. I want to make it to ISEF again, I want to compete at ISEF, and I want to be able to experience these things again! As a middle schooler, being able to come to ISEF was a huge opportunity, and I was awestruck by how many people were there. I was amazed with how intricate the projects were and how the people there all had knowledge of their projects that they could be confident about. I was able to have more confidence when I got first at state than I’ve ever had in something. At ISEF I met so many people from different backgrounds and places; I was able to connect with kids from all over the world who had the same passion for science that I had. I am thankful for the chance to be able to come to ISEF; it was an experience that I will never forget. Ms. Harvey, Mr. Oden, and everyone in our ISEF crew that made it this far, we all bonded! Because of the science fair, I’ve become a better scientist and, in general, a better person. I’ve built a large variety of skills, such as the ability to speak in front of my peers better. Not to mention I also learned how to run statistics and what it actually means. I am thankful to everyone I met, and everyone I spoke to, I hope to come back to ISEF!”

~ **Lola Sondrol - 8th grade, Monte Vista Online Academy**

Notes from Former CSEF/ISEF Student Alumni

“Science fair is an organization and opportunity that helped me in ways I would have never thought possible. I had the absolute privilege of competing at our regional, state, national, and international competitions for science fair. Throughout my early high school career, I couldn’t even imagine making it to the International Science and Engineering Fair. But because I had experienced these levels of competition and the opportunities I had, I became the first Hispanic student in the valley to be selected as a finalist for the Regeneron Science Talent Search and I just couldn’t believe what I had accomplished. I was like every other kid out there, thinking that I could only accomplish the bare minimum. But if you have the drive and the excitement, you can achieve anything you put your mind to.

Science fair helped me find my passion; it helped me plan my future as an ecologist/biologist. It helped me tremendously outside of high school. I believe it was the reason that I got selected to receive a full ride scholarship to attend one of the finest institutions in Colorado. Although I excelled in these competitions, you do not necessarily have to “win” to receive something from participating in science fair. Science fair builds community, you get to meet people who are excited about something just like you. Science fair helps you have a better understanding of the world around you. It allows you to pursue your greatest curiosities in life. Every scientist that is known in history today became known because they had a single idea, and they had the drive to explore it and discover the unimaginable. That can be one of these kids someday. Everyone must start somewhere, and science fair is a great place for kids to get a taste of science at a very young age.

Science fair has the ability to create the scientists of tomorrow, the people who will discover a new drug to cure diseases, the people battling climate change, and the people who will improve our planet and communities

overall. I will never be able to fully express how grateful I am for having the opportunity to represent the San Luis Valley at all these competitions throughout my high school career. I would like to personally thank everyone who made this journey possible, and who will continue make it possible for the generations of kids to come. It is a one-of-a-kind experience, and it can change a kid's perspective and help them in ways they never thought possible, completely changing their future."

~ Marissa Martinez - Monte Vista High School Graduate 2023, ISEF Finalist 2022 & 2023, Science Talent Search (STS) Finalist 2023, Boettcher Scholarship recipient, Junior at Colorado State University, majoring in Biology with an emphasis in Ecology

"Science Fair is one of those things that a person like me just can't shake - and that's a good thing. It has made an impact on me throughout my life, and it will, I hope, continue to do so. Being raised by a science teacher kick-started my desire to explore that subject, though my true passion has always been history. She encouraged my siblings and I to test theories and find answers to basic questions. This transferred easily to developing projects throughout elementary, junior high, and high school. If you ask anyone who participated in Science Fair what they learned, they will usually give some version of the same things: excellent speaking and presenting skills, writing concise and correct scientific papers, learning and carrying out the scientific method, etc. All of these are very true. But for me, and the career path I chose, I also learned much more.

As with most veterinarians, I knew from a young age what my calling was. The steps for becoming one were fairly black and white: school, volunteering/working, college, veterinary school and career. What I didn't know was how impactful having participated in Science Fair was going to be on my career path. One of the first skills I unknowingly learned was communicating with and working alongside scientists and professionals. I discovered a world of professors, biologists, mathematicians, veterinarians, physicians, researchers, chemists, and more. These were opportunities I never would have gotten had it not been for science fair. I quickly became comfortable in their environs and when it came time to enter into a university setting, I gravitated easily towards that comfort zone. I found jobs, volunteer positions, mentors and colleagues that aided me greatly throughout my schooling.

Another skill I learned was researching scientific papers and applying them to my needs. This was helpful for obvious reasons in college and veterinary school, but perhaps even more so in my career now, where I am confronted with some new and exciting challenge that requires research and reflection on a daily basis. I then have to apply my findings to my patients and, perhaps less excitingly, to that time-consuming, precise, and legal document: the medical record. The last benefit that I will note from having been a Science Fair student is the immediate and instinctual knowledge that CSU was the school for me. I was twelve years old when I made it to the Colorado State Science & Engineering Fair for the first time, and walking onto that campus, participating in the activities and meeting some professors made it crystal clear to me that I was home. I spent eight years at CSU, met my future husband (also, a Colorado State Science Fair alum) there, and enjoyed every minute. I believe it was that exposure to a campus far from home, and my comfort in the scientific realm that made a small town girl like me make such an easy and successful transition to undergraduate and professional school.

I can only hope that I can help at least one budding young scientist to realize a dream and a career that they will find as equally rewarding as I find mine. I know that the easiest way to achieve that is through Science Fair and its many wonderful benefits."

~ Kayla Henderson - Sargent High School Graduate 2004, Bachelor of Science in Equine Science and Business Administration 2008 (Colorado State University), Graduate of Veterinary Medical School 2012 (Colorado State University), employed at Alpine Veterinary Clinic since 2012

The History & Purpose of the San Luis Valley Regional Science Fair

From project inception to presenting results to judges, the science fair experience is a blend of **education, communication, competition, camaraderie, creativity, excitement, and cooperation**. This is the unique essence of the San Luis Valley Regional Science Fair.

Established in **1949**, the **San Luis Valley Regional Science Fair (SLVRSF)** is a private, non-profit organization which holds a regional competition each year, with **more than 200 students** from **15 school districts** participating. The purpose of the Fair is to encourage student interest and research in science, engineering, technology, and math, giving students an opportunity to be evaluated by scientific professionals and publicly recognizing their abilities and achievements.

Conducting research and participating in the SLVRSF is one of the few activities where students **demonstrate and integrate a wide variety of 21st century academic skills**. Students are informed and guided by background literature, develop scientific questions, design experiments to answer those questions, utilize mathematical and graphical analysis tools, write scientific research papers, create logical visual displays of their work, and orally communicate and defend their findings to peers and professionals from a diverse range of scientific backgrounds.

Students participate in three divisions: **Elementary** [4th-5th], **Junior** [6th-8th], and **Senior** [9th-12th]. **Grand Awards** in all three divisions are given in Behavioral and Social Science, Biomedical Science, Botany, Chemistry, Consumer Science, Earth and Space Science, Engineering, Environmental Science, Mathematics and Computer Science, Physics and Zoology.

Academic Awards are given for technical writing, oratory skills, best display, most originality, and overall best projects. Additionally, a wide variety of **Special Awards** are given by local businesses, agencies, and private donors. Winning Junior and Senior division projects qualify as finalists for the **Colorado Science & Engineering Fair (CSEF)**, which is held in April in Fort Collins, Colorado. In addition, two senior division students with outstanding projects are awarded an all-expense paid trip to the **Regeneron International Science & Engineering Fair (ISEF)** to represent the SLVRSF as Finalists in this exciting competition.

Engaging educational experiences are presented to the Elementary division students as part of their day of judging. This year, students enjoyed the program “**Muggle Magic: The Science of Harry Potter**”, presented by CU’s Science Discovery Ed program.

The SLVRSF is dedicated to **increasing academic involvement and excellence** for participating fourth through twelfth grade students in our region. With the amazing financial support of our local sponsors and contributors, SLVRSF was able to present **over \$30,000** to students in the form of monetary awards, material awards, scholarships, and all-expense paid trips to ISEF to the outstanding students of our region. The SLVRSF is proud to be an institution that unites San Luis Valley students with scientists, agency professionals, ASU professors, community members, and contributors, all with a common vision of encouraging and developing the next generation of STEM professionals, right here in the SLV.

THANK YOU to all the amazing people who help make this Fair possible!!

Loree’ A. Harvey, SLVRSF Director

SLVRSF Organization

The San Luis Valley Regional Science Fair would not be possible without the dedication and hard work of many committed individuals, including public and private organizations, Adams State University, government agencies, corporations, professional associations, and local businesses. These groups sustain the Fair with both financial and resource support, and most importantly with the donation of time to serve as volunteers on the Fair's working committees, judge teams, and Board of Directors.

Another integral part of the Fair's success is rooted in the deep commitment and tremendous support of school districts, educators, and parents as they encourage and guide their students through the research and scientific experimentation phases of their projects. Some schools showcase their student's work at local School Fairs where students learn to interact with local judges and interested adults, but it is not a requirement for participation at the SLVRSF. The tireless work of educators, parents, and schools in the support of their students creates the foundation of STEM learning that is later showcased at the SLVRSF.

The SLVRSF is committed to supporting students, parents, and educators in the research process and provides year-round support with email, Fall orientation meetings (both in person and virtually), and ongoing website support to help field questions related to rules, procedures, and safety. As an affiliate member of the Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair, the SLVRSF strives to ensure that students are practicing safe science and observe the rules regarding the use of vertebrate animals, potentially hazardous biological agents, human subjects, and hazardous chemicals, activities, and devices.

SLVRSF Mission Statements

The San Luis Valley Regional Science Fair is an organization that:

- Honors winners from local San Luis Valley school fairs at an annual Regional Science Fair
- Sends finalists from the Regional Science Fair to the Colorado Science and Engineering Fair (CSEF)
- Provides two overall winners at the Regional Science Fair with an all-expense paid trip to participate in the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF)
- Encourages students to pursue careers in science, technology, mathematics, or engineering
- Provides a forum for developing academic skills, such as conducting an independent scientific investigation, writing a research paper, speaking, preparing an organized display, and becoming familiar with the scientific method.

The San Luis Valley Regional Science Fair supports local school fairs by:

- Providing a forum where local fairs can influence policies, rules, and by-laws of the San Luis Valley Regional Science Fair

- Providing rules and requirements for participation in all fairs – Regional, State, and International.
- Coordinate mentors
- Provides judges and critique at local school fairs.

Impact Statement

The following represent some of the impacts the San Luis Valley Regional Fair has had on the San Luis Valley:

- Awareness, appreciation, and recognition of the importance of science in our society, livelihoods, academic achievement and lifelong success
- An increased awareness of academic competition and the importance of science among Valley educators
- An increased quality of educational activities in all schools in the region
- An increased usage of libraries and the Internet
- An increased exposure to robotics, holography, pathology, space art, moon geology, and the scientific method to the general public.

* * *

In Memoriam...

“All these years later, I still love that butterfly logo as it symbolizes discovery, growth and change. Years later, I still follow the science fair (through the Valley Courier mostly) and actively participate as a judge at the Ohio State Science Day (Ohio’s State Fair). Over the years, I have judged fairs in Texas and Massachusetts as I reside there. I have always been impressed that the SLV Regional Science Fair does a great job with the number of awards and acknowledgment it gives to its participants; our future. The quality and depth of work the students do is amazing.

I feel fortunate to have been able to be a part of the SLV regional Science Fair; and again, the fair does an exceptional job of providing students with the opportunity to show that science is alive and done extremely well even in rural areas of the world.

Congratulations to all the participants and thank you to all the enthusiastic science teachers, volunteers, and those who donate to keep this as a vital way of giving students the opportunity to challenge themselves to be curious about science and expand their ability to stretch their imagination.

Cliff Percy
Four-time ISEF Finalist
Monte Vista High School Graduate, 1986

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