

FIRE Summit

Over 14,000 people participated in the Forging Innovation in Rural Education (FIRE) summit hosted by the 22 school districts of the Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative (KVEC) in Pikeville on April 11. Over 1,300 persons attended the multi-district K-12 educational professional learning event while more than 13,000 viewers, from 12 countries and 42 states, tuned in to the live stream and engaged with presenter content on The Holler.

More than 160 teachers and students from 22 school district teams presented at the Summit sponsored by KVEC as part of the Race to the Top “Appalachian Renaissance Initiative (ARI).”

Teachers shared the innovations used in their classrooms for their students using the “innovation grants” awarded through the ARI. Demonstrations included drone design and build, robotics, aviation, tele-medicine, advanced manufacturing, student publishing, and much more.

This year’s summit also featured a “*Summit within a Summit.*” This powerful health and wellness conference within the Summit included “Health-A-Lacha” in which teams of students developed strategies to overcome this growing crisis in our region and our country.

The Building it Forward Project (Tiny House) was back again this year with five new schools joining three returning schools in the project. The Tiny House Village consisted of Breathitt, Floyd, Knott, Lee, Letcher, Leslie, Johnson, and Pike (Phelps). By taking learning outside and getting hands-on experience, students were able to learn basic workplace behavior and develop specific skills within an industry. The houses are being auctioned off on The Holler with the funds to be used to build more houses next year.

The summit has grown into an international conference with viewing from around the world viewing the presentations and activities. The countries included Canada, France, United Kingdom, China, Germany Saudi Arabia, Spain, and Peru.

The event streamed LIVE on The Holler from 10 locations across the East Kentucky EXPO Center and featured educators showcasing their upcoming projects in one of 32 breakout sessions over the course of the day. The FIRE summit sessions have been archived and are available at www.theholler.org.

The Harlan County School District was represented by the Community Problem Solving Team and coach Ginger Rice. The team consists of Chelsey Caldwell, Breanna Epperson and Jordan Blevins. Also representing Harlan County was the ARI Student Senate Senior member Breanna Epperson and Junior member Garry Hensen who shared their progress

with current projects and future plans for the district. For more information contact David Hensley, Harlan County ARI Innovations Coordinator or visit www.theholler.org to view the archived sessions.