

## BOARD HONORS EPPERSON FOR ARC/ORNL STEM PROGRAM

Lucas Epperson, a senior at Harlan County High School, was honored by the Harlan County Board of Education this week for his participation in the Appalachian Regional Commission's Oak Ridge National Laboratory's Summer STEM Program.

The program traditionally is residential, but was held virtually due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The program is a gateway to science, technology, engineering and math in the Appalachian Region.

All participants work with award-winning scientists at ORNL, one of the largest U.S. Department of Energy research facilities in the United States.

Participants conduct guided group science, math and computer science technology research projects, while high school teachers work with science practitioners to develop STEM-related curriculum.

Epperson told the board members that his team's project involved geo-mapping. Participants were challenged to find an ideal location for the development of a smart neighborhood to utilize solar power. Geo-mapping is the process of taking location-based data and using it to create a map for the challenge.

He described the program as having been "amazing," complimenting his fellow participants and the instructors.

The son of Clarence and April Epperson, he plans to attend the University of Kentucky next fall to pursue a degree in the College of Engineering.

He is a member of the HCHS Black Bear cross country and track and field teams and the engineering Project Lead the Way program.

