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Two California State University Northridge Students Receive **\$7,000** in 1st Place Contest Winnings from the Miller Ingenuity Challenge

Steve Blue, president and CEO of Miller Ingenuity, credits their expertise collaboration when awarding the students on Tuesday

California State University
Northridge

February 24, 2015...Los Angeles, CA... Miller Ingenuity awarded the first place prize for The Miller Ingenuity Challenge today at California State University Northridge to both James McCloskey, a graduate student in the College of Engineering and Computer Science, and Lily Thiemens, an English major, who worked together on their winning submission. Their response to the question - *How Might American Manufacturers Attract the Best and Brightest Innovative Minds to Pursue Careers in the Manufacturing Industry* won them \$7,000.

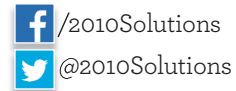
“I must admit I was pretty excited when I learned that McCloskey and Thiemens’ submission placed first. Though I wasn’t part of the judging panel, I felt their submission was the best,” said Steve Blue, CEO and President of Miller Ingenuity. “At Miller Ingenuity we know new ideas that can benefit our customers come from working together cross departmentally. Like these two students, the best outcome came when people with different expertise were able to collaborate and solve the challenge at hand. Imagine the possibilities for American Manufacturing if we could use this same principle on a much larger scale.”

The national contest, which received more than 30 submissions, was launched in celebration of the opening of Miller Ingenuity’s Creation Station, a Google-like think space in the middle of the factory. Under the leadership of Blue, Miller Ingenuity has undergone significant changes which resulted in quadrupled total sales. The construction and opening of Creation Station is the physical manifestation of the culture change taking place. The contest, a first for Miller Ingenuity, was seen as a way to share how they gained their success in order to strengthen manufacturing in Minnesota and throughout the U.S.

“We are delighted that the submission from James and Lily has been selected as the winning entry in the Miller Ingenuity Challenge competition,” said S. K. Ramesh, Ph.D. Dean, College of Engineering and Computer Science. “It is a testament to the quality of our programs as students from our college continue to shine in various national and international events. CSUN offers cutting edge programs in engineering and computer science and plays a leading role in the White House Maker Faire Initiative focused on Advanced Manufacturing.”

SNAPSHOT

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Miller Ingenuity's Creation Station, continued.

“People have asked me why a rail manufacturing company in Minnesota executed a national contest for students in higher education,” said Blue. “My response – why not us? If the U.S. is to stay competitive in the worldwide manufacturing industry, we all need to be thinking differently and asking the hard questions about our future. This contest has served as a great conversation starter and we hope to take what we have learned and share in an open source way. Stay tuned!”

The judges, which included professionals working in higher education and economic development, commented that McCloskey and Thiemens' submission stood out because they “integrated a career pathway from school to the real world”. They were impressed with their recommendation to not focus on just luring smart young people to manufacturing, but to instead cultivate their skills and creativity from childhood through young adulthood with a 3-tiered outreach program:

1. Target manufacturing concepts to elementary and middle schools via a manufacturing and automation video game—only a few exist.
2. High school and extra-curricular after school programs and mentorships with students recommended by teachers, including the cooperation of manufacturing firms exposing students to real world careers.
3. College recruiting and manufacturing skills certification—manufacturers' partner with academic institutions, including but not limited to teaching classes about industry specific challenges.

Miller Ingenuity is a railway component solutions company based in Winona, MN. From their earliest days more than 60 years ago when their founder, “Rudy” Miller, invented the wick lubricator, they have demonstrated the ability to conceptualize, design, produce and deliver railroad parts that meet the current and emerging needs of the industry. Their continued innovations are driven by three core motivations: to take on customer challenges, to think more creatively about solutions, and, humbly, to be everyday heroes to their customers. They put these beliefs into action based on deep and “factory floor” relationships with customers and on an ability to invent, engineer, and deliver solutions.

The Miller Ingenuity 2014 Innovation Challenge launched in October and closed in December 2014. Contestants were required to submit a positioning paper that included: Executive Summary, Recommendations, Business Case, and Action Steps. In addition, only submissions that included a 3-minute or less video that communicated a compelling and creative answer to the Challenge question were judged. To view the contest website, go to www.ingenuitychallenge2014.com.

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ABOUT MILLER INGENUITY

Miller Ingenuity is a transportation component solutions company based in Winona, MN. For more than 60 years, thanks to its founder “Rudy” Miller who invented a product that saved revolutionized rail transport, the company has demonstrated the ability to conceptualize, design, produce and deliver transportation parts that meet the current and emerging needs of the industry. Miller Ingenuity's continued innovations are driven by three core motivations: to take on customer challenges, to think more creatively about solutions, and to be everyday heroes to their customers.