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**U of I Architecture Students Take Honors in “Best Use of Idaho Wood” Design Contest**

**MOSCOW, Idaho — Dec. 14, 2017** — Three University of Idaho architecture students were awarded top honors in the sixth annual “Best Use of Idaho Wood” competition earlier this month.

The contest, sponsored by the Idaho Forest Products Commission (IFPC) and the American Institute of Architecture (AIA) Idaho Chapter, encourages the innovative use of Idaho wood in architectural design.

“This collaboration creates a dialogue between the people who provide Idaho wood products and the people who use them,” said Betty Munis, IFPC director. “It is a great opportunity for architect students to consider using wood in design.”

This year’s challenge was to develop conceptual designs for the Idaho Arena, a court sports and events arena planned for U of I’s Moscow campus. Alec Holser, a principal at Opsis Architecture, the firm selected to design the arena, gave a presentation at the awards luncheon titled “Wood Design: Connecting Sustainability and Beauty in a Regional Architecture.”

Twenty students entered the competition as part of the third-year architectural design studio taught by Associate Professor Diane Armpriest and Assistant Professor Carolina Manrique.

“The Idaho Arena project provided an excellent opportunity for this year’s design competition,” Armpriest said. “It’s a real-world project happening on their campus.”

To help inform their designs, students explored a variety of inspiring wood structures around the globe. They also learned about forest ecosystems, native tree species, sustainable forestry and aspects of forest certification through visits to the U of I’s experimental forest and the Idaho Forest Group mill in Lewiston.

“The IFPC competition provides an exciting opportunity for students to explore the possibilities of wood as an expressive material for structural and non-structural elements in architectural design while gaining better understanding of this locally grown renewable material and the role it can play in sustainable building,” Manrique said.

Matt Siron of Eagle won the competition and received a first place plaque and $500. Megan Danell of Kuna and Carlos Auces of Nampa each received an award of merit plaque and $250.

The winning conceptual design is a clear and expressive cable-stayed structure with a dramatic colonnade base, integrating it with the foreground of the ASUI-Kibbie Activity Center.

“My design came from a vernacular of Idaho itself,” Siron said. “It was synthesis of the beautiful natural environment coupled with the industrial feel and texture of agriculture farmland.”

 Jury members noted the implied “Viking style” was immediately recognizable and graphically attractive.

Members of the jury included: Alec Holser of Opsis Architecture in Portland; John Day of Slichter Ugrin Architecture in Boise; Scott Lawrence, assistant professor of architecture; and Jesse Short, regional manager for Idaho Forest Group in Lewiston.

“One can’t help but be inspired by the students’ creative ideas and ability to apply the beauty, strength and energy efficiency of wood to architectural design,” Munis said. “It’s a pleasure to provide these awards and recognize the students’ work.”

For more information about the IFPC visit [www.idahoforests.org](http://www.idahoforests.org). For more information about the Idaho Arena, visit <https://www.uidaho.edu/giving/athletics/idaho-arena>

• Media note: Images of the students’ designs are available for download at <https://uidahophoto.photoshelter.com/galleries/C00008pwKWpfuGDc/G0000_bb73bxFRJQ/IFPC-IdahoWoodCompetion> Password: UIdahoMedia213512

**About the University of Idaho**

The University of Idaho, home of the Vandals, is Idaho’s land-grant, national research university. From its residential campus in Moscow, U of I serves the state of Idaho through educational centers in Boise, Coeur d’Alene and Idaho Falls, a research and Extension center in Twin Falls, plus Extension offices in 42 counties. Home to more than 11,000 students statewide, U of I is a leader in student-centered learning and excels at interdisciplinary research, service to businesses and communities, and in advancing diversity, citizenship and global outreach. U of I competes in the Big Sky Conference and Sun Belt Conference. Learn more at [www.uidaho.edu](http://www.uidaho.edu/).

**Media Contacts:**

Betty Munis

Idaho Forest Products Commission

208-334-3292

ifpc@idahoforests.org

Holly Funk

College of Art and Architecture

Marketing and Communications Manager

208-631-9211

hollyfunk@uidaho.edu