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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Top 5 MWA Essay Finalists Selected Students Prepare for Final Judging, March 21st

Apple Valley, CA—Five students ranging in age from 14 to 18, representing four High Desert communities have been selected as the top five finalists in the Mojave Water Agency essay contest. The finalists will go on to compete for the grand prize of a \$5,000 scholarship and will serve as one the speakers at the 2016 High Desert Water Summit on April 13th at the Barstow Community College Performing Arts Center.

The finalists include: Raeven Jones from Granite Hills High School in Apple Valley; Nolan Serumaga from University Preparatory School in Victorville; Enrique Arcilla from the Academy for Academic Excellence in Apple Valley; Emilia Cloutman from Sultana High School in Hesperia; and Geng-Wei Lee from Barstow who attends the University of California in Los Angeles.

“We’re quite pleased with the caliber of essays submitted by these students,” said Beverly Lowry, MWA Board President. “Our purpose with this contest is to raise awareness with future generations that water is a precious resource here in the High Desert.”

Each of the finalists has been paired with a community mentor who will work with their assigned student to help them prepare for the final competition. Serving as mentors are community leaders Eric Schmidt, Jeanette Hayhurst, Rachel Molina; David Greiner, and Orlando Acevedo.

A panel of independent judges will make the final selection on March 21st. In addition to the first-place scholarship of \$5,000, each of the remaining finalists will receive a scholarship of \$1,000 each.

In addition to the student speaker, the 2016 High Desert Water Summit will feature Dr. Christopher Thornberg, founding partner of Beacon Economics based in Los Angeles. He will provide an economic and population profile of the region. Also featured will be Ellen Hanak, Senior Fellow and Director of the Public Policy Institute Water Policy Center in San Francisco. Hanak is one of the principle authors of "Allocating California's Water: Directions for Reform."

Additionally, Lance Eckhart, MWA Director of Basin Management and Water Resources will present water supply and demand projections included in the current update of the Regional Urban Water Management Plan.

The Water Summit will run from 7:15 to 11:30 a.m. on April 13 at the Barstow Community College Performing Arts Center. The campus is located at 2700 Barstow Road.

Cost for the event is just \$10 and includes a full breakfast buffet. Reservations must be made via online. Proceeds from the event will help fund student scholarships. To reserve your seat today, go to the Mojave Water Agency's website at <http://mojavewater.org> and click on the link to on the home page to register.

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