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CyberThon Funds Available for College Scholarships

Pensacola AFCEA chapter offers funding to 2017 high school graduates

PENSACOLA – Local high school students pursuing advanced education in a STEM field (Science, Technology, Engineering or Math) are now eligible for new funding in the form of AFCEA scholarships. The AFCEA Blue Angels Pensacola Chapter is [making \\$10,000 in college funds available](#) to local high school graduates as a result of generous sponsor support of CyberThon 2017.

CyberThon, hosted in January at the National Naval Aviation Museum and the National Flight Academy, gave high school and college students [hands-on experience in cyber defense and engagement procedures](#). Cybersecurity professionals from the military, technology companies, and academic institutions volunteered as team leaders to mentor students in the cybersecurity team challenge event created to grow Pensacola’s IT and cybersecurity workforce.

“Support for CyberThon has grown each year, and we are thrilled to be able to invest in the futures of students as a result,” said chapter president Randy Ramos. “One of the primary goals of AFCEA Pensacola is to help build an employable workforce and advance STEM education in our community, which is why we work so hard to raise support for events like CyberThon that make scholarships possible. This really is at the heart of our AFCEA mission.”

One of the key contributors making the scholarships possible is the Escambia County Sheriff’s Office, which donated \$25,000 from the State Law Enforcement Trust Fund to CyberThon 2017. “By supporting these students we are developing a cyber-skilled workforce prepared for high demand careers in law enforcement, the military and in the private sector,” said Escambia County Sheriff David Morgan. Additional major sponsors of CyberThon 2017 included AMTIS, CSRA, GBSI, Gulf Power, Innovation Coast, Navy Federal Credit Union, SCSS, TechSoft, the UWF Center for Cybersecurity, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

More than 140 local students from dozens of schools across Northwest Florida participated in CyberThon 2017, which featured a “capture the flag” style competition for the first time in the event’s three-year history. Following two days of spirited competition, teams from the University of West Florida and Tate High School took first place honors in the college and high school divisions respectively. After quadrupling in size to 81 students in 2016, CyberThon attendance and impact nearly doubled again in 2017 with 141 total elementary through college students attending.

While the success of CyberThon was a catalyst for these scholarship awards, students who apply are not limited to cybersecurity studies. Any local high school senior bound for college in a science, technology, engineering or math track is eligible to apply. The AFCEA Pensacola Board of Directors will award up to 10 scholarships of \$1,000 each. Additional information, application documents and submission instructions are available at <http://afceapensacola.org/scholarships>. The deadline for application submission is April 20, with awards announced by May 15.

AFCEA BLUE ANGELS PENSACOLA CHAPTER

In addition to these scholarships, CyberThon funds will support cybersecurity summer camps hosted by the AFCEA Pensacola Chapter and other STEM teaching grants made to local elementary and middle schools. The AFCEA Blue Angels Pensacola Chapter is extremely thankful for the tremendous support shown by the sponsors of CyberThon!

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CyberThon on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CyberThonPcola/>

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