

PRESS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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UWF, Tate High School teams take top honors in CyberThon 2017

More than 140 students from dozens of schools across the region participate in record third annual event

High Resolution event photos:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/a074l8qowcun52b/AABGrovpFXqXRICzHhzdY2ha?dl=0>

Facebook photo album with titles and descriptions:

https://www.facebook.com/pg/CyberThonPcola/photos/?tab=album&album_id=568449803359413

PENSACOLA – More than 140 local students from dozens of schools across Northwest Florida participated in CyberThon 2017 last weekend, the third annual cybersecurity challenge event hosted by the [AFCEA Blue Angels Pensacola Chapter](#). 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. The Escambia County Sheriff's Office led sponsor support for the third consecutive year, with Sheriff David Morgan presenting a check for \$25,000 to support the event at Friday's opening ceremonies.

New for CyberThon 2017 was a "capture the flag" style gameplay carried out on the FacebookCTF platform customized specifically for this event. Teams worked to win points on the game board while completing challenges on a computer network that included a simulated online financial system. Dubbed "First Federation Credit Union," the fully functional banking environment was designed by Premier Sponsor Navy Federal Credit Union. Teams used software tools including Security Onion and Splunk to monitor suspicious network activity and complete gameplay challenges.

Control of the CyberThon leaderboard changed hands multiple times during the two-day competition, with teams from Pensacola State College, Pine Forest High School, Tate High School, and UWF all taking turns in the top spot. In the end, however, teams from UWF and Tate High School emerged as winners in the college and high school divisions. Penalty points were assessed for teams that chose to request a hint for specific challenges, and the UWF team, led by Dustin Mink, notably requested no hints and received zero scoring penalties. The team from George Stone Technical Center was awarded

second place in the college division, while a Tate High School team led by Kevin Schmidt took the top spot among high schools while scoring more points overall before penalties than any team in the event. Tate High swept both top spots among high schools, with a team led by Michelle Ward claiming second place.

Also new to the event this year was a CyberSAFE certification training course for middle school students that participated in 2016 summer cyber camps hosted by AFCEA. After a training course taught by GBSI instructor Johnson Warwick, a group of 17 students successfully earned their Certified CyberSAFE credential from Logical Operations. “This represents an amazing moment for our AFCEA chapter and for CyberThon,” said Randy Ramos, president of the AFCEA Blue Angels Pensacola Chapter. “This event exists to spark enthusiasm in students and to cultivate a future cybersecurity workforce. To successfully train and award a group of young students with an industry recognized certification is a high point in our mission, and why CyberThon was created.” In addition to the CyberSAFE training group, 50 students from Bellview Elementary and Bellview Middle schools toured the CyberThon event on Friday to participate in cyber challenge games and observe opening ceremonies.

Middle school, high school, and college participants included students representing:

Avalon Middle School	Pensacola Christian Academy
Bailey Middle School	Pensacola State College
Bellview Elementary School	Pine Forest High School
Bellview Middle School	Ransom Middle School
Brown Barge Middle School	Sims Middle School
George Stone Technical Center	Tate High School
Gulf Coast State College	University of West Florida
Hellen Caro Elementary School	Warrington Middle School
Home School	West Florida High School
Little Flower Catholic School	Woodlawn Beach Middle School
Pace High School	

In support of the Department of Homeland Security’s mission statement that “Homeland Security Begins with Hometown Security,” the three-day event also included keynote addresses on cybersecurity trends from leading experts in the cyber industry.

Guest Speakers at Friday opening ceremonies and Sunday closing ceremonies included:

Mr. Ray Murphy, VP Information Security, Navy Federal Credit Union. (Friday a.m.)
Captain Bill Lintz, Commanding Officer, Center for Information Warfare Training (Friday a.m.)
Mr. Joseph Campbell Senior Industrial Security Specialist, Defense Security Service. (Friday p.m.)
Mr. John Felker, Director, National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center, Department of Homeland Security. (Friday p.m.)
Mr. Bill Hills, Executive Vice-President and Chief Information Officer, Navy Federal Credit Union. (Sunday Closing Ceremonies)

CyberThon 2017 Sponsors:

Premier Sponsors: Escambia County Sheriff's Office, Navy Federal Credit Union

Diamond Sponsors: Surveillance and Cyber Security Solutions, LLC (SCSS), GBSI

Gold Sponsors: AMTIS, August Schell, CSRA, DHS, Gulf Power, Innovation Coast, Techsoft, UWF Center for Cybersecurity

Silver Sponsors: AppRiver, FloridaWest, George Stone Technical Center, PenAir Federal Credit Union, Pensacola State College, Santa Rosa Economic Development, UWF Innovation Institute, vTECH io, TEKsystems

Cybersecurity continues to be a rapidly growing industry with strong demand for skilled technical workers, and Escambia County offers a wealth of training and career opportunities for interested students. Pensacola is also home to many of the leading tech firms in the region. As the leading organization for increasing technology information in the defense, homeland security and intelligence communities, AFCEA and the local Blue Angels Pensacola chapter are thrilled to be hosting CyberThon 2017.

About AFCEA: Founded in 1946, AFCEA International's roots trace back to the American Civil War. Today, AFCEA serves as a bridge between government requirements and industry capabilities, representing the top government, industry and military professionals in the fields of information technology, communications and intelligence. The AFCEA Blue Angels Pensacola Chapter has been an active participant in raising scholarship funds for local technology students for more than a decade.

For more information and event updates:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/CyberThonPcola

Twitter: [@cyberthonpcola](https://twitter.com/cyberthonpcola), #cyberthon

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2017 Promo Video:

<https://vimeo.com/185993727>

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The logo for CyberThon features the word "CYBERTHON" in a bold, sans-serif font. The letters "CYBER" are in red, and "THON" is in blue. The letter "O" in "THON" is replaced by a blue hexagon. The entire logo is set against a dark blue background with a glowing, wavy light effect at the bottom.