

## Marilyn Garlick

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**From:** Sean Kirkpatrick <seankirk23@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 28, 2019 8:34 AM  
**To:** Commissioners  
**Subject:** recent South County STEM success!

Dear Mr. Mayor and City Commissioners,

I wanted to give all of you great news regarding Atwater Elementary School's STEM success this year. They recently completed not one but two STEM feats this year. At the end of January, Atwater took two places at the County-level Science fair which had over three hundred participants. Gabriella Kirkpatrick became the first Atwater Elementary student to receive a County-level award three years in a row (and might be the only South County elementary student to have done so). Overall Atwater Elementary took 6 County-level awards in the last three years!

Last weekend an even bigger STEM feat was accomplished. Earlier this year Atwater Elementary became the first South County elementary school to field a *VEX IQ* Robotics team. Most of the teams they faced met every day as a class and were fielded from mainly Middle schools with several years prior experience. The Atwater teams met after school for only twice a week. Being new to the *VEX IQ* competitive world, expectations were realistic but still hopeful.

Boy we were surprised. Back in November at the Bobcat Brawl (North Port High School), one of our 5<sup>th</sup> grade teams placed 4<sup>th</sup> overall and won the prestigious *Judges Award* after having been a team for less than two months. This last weekend at the Clash of the Creek (Heron Creek Middle School) all three teams qualified for the Judges Interview (only 6 teams qualified!). The same 5<sup>th</sup> grade team took 6<sup>th</sup> place overall and won the *Create Award*. Just as exciting for the future, our 4<sup>th</sup> grade team took the *Build Award*. Two Awards out of six possible with 10 schools competing in their division.

I speak for all the parents involved that we are very proud of all these young peoples' accomplishments and we are extremely thankful to all that helped make this year's success possible, in particular Mrs. Heather Bingle (Science Fair), Mrs. Kristina Confer (Robotics), and Principal Cynthia Thro (Administrative support). Most of the 5<sup>th</sup> graders from this group will continue to build on their STEM endeavors next year at Woodland Middle School.

Thank you again for allowing me to share this great news.

Sean Kirkpatrick