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Premier of the Hydro Think Tank at Southern Company's Logan Martin Dam



Evergreen, CO (May 23, 2018)

The Hydropower Foundation partnered with Southern Company to the first-of-a-kind Hydro Think Tank which premiered the week of May 14th. Twelve undergraduate students from the University of Alabama -Birmingham, University of Alabama – Tuscaloosa, Auburn University & Sanford University arrived to Logan-Martin Dam for an intense week of hands-on problem solving to give their best solution to a pressing dissolved oxygen problem for Southern Company. The students were put in teams of four, with students from different universities in each group. This created a real-life work experience, teaming up with new people who had varying personalities and experience levels. The students were provided with a week filled with exploration of the problem set at the dam and power plant as well as, training, team work and team building workshops. Each team was competing for the grand cash prize of \$500 per student.



Teams were judged by a panel of Southern Company Executives, River Managers, industry professionals and Hydropower Foundation members on ingenuity, practicality of solution, and presentation. This was truly an opportunity to practice real-life business and engineering skills, hone individual talents and apply knowledge learned over the week to solve a pressing need in river systems.

Kenneth Odom, Principal Engineer at Southern Company stated, “The Hydro Think Tank allowed us to spend some very meaningful time with students from some of the universities in Alabama, teaching them about all the hydropower that’s right here in our state. It’s an opportunity for us to give back to our community and hopefully influence these students to consider us as an employer in the future.”

Lisa Martindale, who is the River Manager for the lower Coosa river system at Alabama Power shared, “The Hydro Think Tank was a great opportunity for college students in STEM majors to apply their knowledge to a real-world challenge. The condensed program balanced instruction with creative and innovative problem solving, teamwork, and technical presentation skills. I believe each person benefited by participating in this program. In my role supporting the Hydro Think Tank, I was able to observe the group go from individuals to cohesive teams that not only met but exceeded their objectives. It was rewarding to be a part of the activities and get to know each participant. I am already looking forward to doing this again!”

Students, who participated in the Hydro Think Tank, were surveyed at the week's end and they unanimously responded that they were 100% more likely to pursue a career in hydropower after participating in the Hydro Think Tank and they were 100% more likely to refer their friends to participate in the next Hydro Think Tank.



Southern Company continues to lead and engage with the university community in meaningful ways like this Hydro Think Tank. This opportunity provided practical skills for career development and exposed bright students to opportunities at Southern Company and within the hydropower industry. Thanks to Southern Company's stewardship of this competition, a new model for how to attract great talent to the industry has been created.

The Hydropower Foundation, formerly, Hydro Research Foundation, was established in 1994 and became an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation in 1996. The Foundation has two principal objectives: (1) Partnering with the hydropower community to provide resources to address our most pressing challenges. (2) Advancing hydropower's role in a clean affordable energy future.

For inquires on hosting a Hydro Think Tank contact Bree Mendlin, Grants & Events Coordinator with Hydropower Foundation at bree@hydrofoundation.org or at 720-280-9429.