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Annual photography contest finds state's beauty and blight

by Susan Voyles
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Jennifer Rachiell made a beeline to a former dump on the east side of Las Vegas to capture a grand-prize winning photograph for Scenic Nevada's annual Beauty or Blight competition.

"As soon as I heard about it, I knew exactly where I was going," said Rachiell, a first-grade teacher in Las Vegas.

Her photo is a striking contrast of a close-up of an old Pepsi-Cola bottle at a former dump and high-rises of the world-famous Las Vegas Strip in the background. It was taken just after sunset to get the light on the trash and the blackened hotels.

She said bulldozers had raked refuse to one side of the old landfill.

"It's acres and acres. Kids go out there. Artists go out there to collect old rusty pieces. But I'm sure if the economy hadn't taken a downswing, it would have been developed," said Rachiell, a Gardnerville native.

More than 1,049 entries were submitted from all over the state this year, up by 355 photos from 2008. The contest is to draw attention to the importance of preserving and enhancing the scenic beauty of Nevada, said Doug Smith, Scenic Nevada president.

The other grand prize winner was Megan Atkinson, of Legacy High School in North Las Vegas, who shot a lone horseback rider approaching a large cottonwood tree in the hills of Cold Creek. She and Rachiell won \$150 each.

In the student division, winners in the beauty category were Stephen Hughey, Elko High School, first place; Christine Mootz, Green Valley High School, second place; and Janelle Wilhelm, Legacy High School, third place.

Student "blight" winners were Tabor Wight, Elko High School, first place; Chris Martinez, Liberty High School, Henderson, second place; and Kalena Murray, Arbor View High School, Las Vegas, third place.

Adult winners in the beauty category were Quing Yang, of Chapel Hill, N.C., first place; Russell Colletta, Yerington, second place; and Sherman Neal, Ely, third place.

Adult winners for blight were Maia Dickerson, Reno, first place; Jack Hursh, Reno, second place; and Deborah Selof, Las Vegas, third place.

First-place winners received \$100, second place, \$50, and third place, \$25.

Judges this year were Penny Roskoski, Bob Goodman, Marilyn Melton, Marilyn Newton and Tim Torrell, all of the Reno area. The contest was sponsored by Jim Pilzner, of Reno, Roskoski, Melton

and Scenic Nevada.

Additional Facts

On The web

Scenic Nevada:
www.scenicnevada.org
