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INAUGURAL CORTEX OLYMPICS AT CABLE-TEC EXPO® GENERATES ELECTRIC ATMOSPHERE, SHOWCASES TOP TECHNICAL TALENT IN INDUSTRY'S WORKFORCE

OCT. 20, 2017 (Denver, CO)—Bright minds and skilled hands were on prominent display before hundreds of enthusiastic and curious onlookers here Thursday evening as the Society of Cable Telecommunications Engineers (SCTE) and its global arm, the International Society of Broadband Experts (ISBE), conducted the first CORTEX Olympics at Expo Evening.

Kevin Troub of Cable ONE maintained that cable operator's dominance of the SCTE•ISBE IP Challenge by becoming its newest champion, and Greg Brakefield of Comporium Communications solidified his legendary stature in the SCTE•ISBE International Cable-Tec Games by capturing a remarkable fourth Cable-Tec Games title since 2011.

Unlike years past, this year the two annual skills competitions were concurrent and collocated at Expo Evening, which itself, in a departure from tradition, was kept onsite this year in the Exhibit Hall in the Colorado Convention Center at SCTE•ISBE Cable-Tec Expo® 2017. Having commenced Tuesday, Expo 2017 concludes today.

New champion Troub is an IP Specialist with Cable ONE, in Phoenix. His colleague, Douglas Van Gessel, an IP Specialist II with Cable ONE, in Phoenix, finished second, and IP Challenge 2014 Champion Jamie Griffin, director of technology, Full Channel, in Barrington, R.I., placed third. Thirteen professionals competed in the IP Challenge at Expo last evening. Of the annual event's seven champions, Troub is the fourth one from Cable ONE.

Troub, Van Gessel, and Griffin took first place, respectively, in three of the preliminary IP Challenge contests last evening. Jeremy Schmeichel, principal network engineer, Vast Broadband, also won a preliminary event.

Just across the Exhibit Hall, new champion Brakefield, a cable line technician with Comporium Communications, in Rock Hill, S.C., took the gold medal as the overall winner of the Cable-Tec Games. The 2016 champion, Greg Babinski, Tech III, Line/Plant Maintenance, with Charter Communications, in New Port Richey, Fla., captured silver medal honors, and newcomer Nathan Sidlinger, a technician with Mediacom Communications, in Moline, Ill., took home the bronze medal.

Brakefield represented the Piedmont Chapter, of Region 10; Babinski represented the Central Florida Chapter, in Region 9; and Sidlinger represented the Iowa Heartland Chapter, of Region 5. Brakefield topped a field of 30 competitors last evening at Expo.

Honors were presented during a joint awards ceremony on the stage of Innovation Theater, where the IP Challenge had just concluded. The IP Challenge features a Jeopardy-style contest as well as router configuration exercises. The Cable-Tec Games comprises seven individual contests. Brakefield won gold in Meter Reading, Optical Time Domain Reflectometer (OTDR), Cable Splicing, and Metallic Time Domain Reflectometer (MTDR). Shannon Cameron of Ritter and the Razorback Chapter, Region 8, won Fiber Splicing. Jerry Kennicott of Comcast and the Bonneville Chapter, Region 2, won Drop Connection. And, Kyle Halverson of Comcast and the Mount Rainier Chapter, Region 3, won Cable Jeopardy.

Only three of the past 10 International Cable-Tec Games at Expo have been won by someone not named Greg B.—because Greg Brakefield’s archrival, Greg Babinski, who owns three of those titles, claimed the Games in 2008, 2014, and 2016. Brakefield’s title this year is added to his 2011, 2013, and 2015 championships over the same stretch. In fact, oddly enough, during this stretch Brakefield’s titles have come in odd-numbered years, Babinski’s in even-numbered ones. Brakefield finished second to Babinski last year.

Greenlee Communications and Trilithic sponsored the 2017 International Cable-Tec Games, the 27th annual Games. The 2017 IP Challenge was sponsored by Cisco. Expo Evening, the always-popular industry networking event, was sponsored this year by Vericom, with bar sponsors KGPCo and Momentum Telecom.

The Society united the two skills competitions under one newly branded banner, CORTEX Olympics at Expo Evening. CORTEX, which means Curriculum Optimized for ROI and Technical Excellence, is the Society’s new Expert Development System, which is designed to make the industry’s workforce technically proficient, keep it up to date, and prepare it for what’s next.

For winning, Troub received a complimentary pass to Cisco Live 2018 and a complimentary registration to Cable-Tec Expo 2018, and Brakefield received a complimentary registration to Expo 2018.

Details about the format and structure of the IP Challenge and the Cable-Tec Games are available at www.scte.org.

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*The **Society of Cable Telecommunications Engineers (SCTE)** is part of a unique ecosystem that has the power to prepare the workforce to meet the ever-changing demands of the Telecommunications Industry. Our members can realize streamlined delivery of products and services, improved customer satisfaction, and increased employee retention rates directly impacting business results. In cooperation with our partners, CableLabs® and NCTA, SCTE prepares tomorrow’s telecommunications leaders by communicating new Industry trends and technology, developing standards, and delivering relevant training and certification programs to enhance members’ expertise and professional development. SCTE and its global brand, the International Society of Broadband Experts (ISBE), build value for corporate, vendor, and individual members by creating peer networking opportunities, professional mentoring, and communication of Industry information. Visit www.scte.org. Connect with SCTE at www.scte.org/socialmedia.*

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