



The MHS Greenpower team pictured at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway museum, back, from left, James Ray, Reid Olson, Bradon Owens and Kenyon Butler; front, from left, Jacob Johnson, Graysen Pierson, Ethan Larsen Alex Stevens (in driver's seat), Katelyn Dickenson and Bryan Taylor. Photo courtesy of Tina Pierson

Greenpower race: Sanpete teams sweep state, Manti takes fourth in nationals at Indy 500

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INDIANAPOLIS—When it comes to successfully combining engineering, sustainable energy and motorsports, Sanpete County's students are the best in the state.

Some of them, in fact, are among the best in the entire nation.

Within the last week, Sanpete County schools came out winners at the Utah Greenpower Races at the Utah Motor Sports Park in Tooele, and a team from Manti High School placed fourth at Greenpower national competitions at the home of the Indy 500.

On Monday, the MHS team competed against 24 other U.S. teams and a team from England on the Grand Prix road circuit at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. The team took fourth place in the competition after overcoming what parent Tina Pierson called "major challenges."

That was after teams from Gunnison Valley Middle School, Gunnison Valley High School and Manti High School took first, second and third places, respectively, at the Utah Greenpower Races at the Utah Motor Sports Park in Tooele last Thursday, April 27. There, Ephraim Middle School also finished in a fourth-place tie with Uintah and Clearfield High Schools.

In the Greenpower program, which is sponsored in Utah by Utah State University's GEAR UP program, students build a single-seat, student-driven electric car and race head-to-head with other participating schools. Greenpower races consist of two 90-minute heats with the winning team having gone the greatest distance in that time.

In the national races in Indianapolis on Monday, MHS's car experienced major electrical problems and its motor failed in the first of the two 90-minute heats.

"The team had to pull the car off the road and perform some major rewiring," Pierson says. "They actually had the car back on the road in 20 minutes."

At the competition, judges took each team's best score from both heats, so the Manti team was able to use its score from the second,

problem-free heat, resulting in the fourth-place overall finish.

Fifteen teams from throughout Utah participated at the statewide event in Tooele.

At the race, North Sanpete Middle School came in seventh while North Sanpete High School's team took 12th.

GVMS fielded the only team where two of the drivers were girls—Abby Anderson and Lily Huber. The third driver was Brock Overly. GVMS picked up a screw during the preliminary race, resulting in a flat tire—but that didn't slow them down. During the awards ceremony, the announcer called the GVMS car “the car that wouldn't quit.”

EMS received the “Best Pit Stops” award, and North Sanpete Middle School won a “Best Progress” award.

“The students were all very excited to build the car and participate in the race,” NSMS adviser Corby Briggs said.

The Manti High School team was disappointed in its third-place finish at the Utah race. However, adviser Ben Schoppe said the team was more interested in using the event as a trial run in preparation for the national event, which Manti attended after having taken first place in last year's state competition.

“While we hoped to repeat our first place position from last year's event, we are excited about the outcome because all of the top four teams were from Sanpete County and have collaborated to be successful,” Schoppe said after Thursday's event.

The Greenpower Challenge is a worldwide program begun in the U.K. in 1999 which reached the U.S. three years ago. Utah sponsor Utah State University's USU STARS! GEAR UP is a federally funded program that prepares Utah students to enter college through developing their interest in engineering, science and math. Program co-coordinator Melia Balls said currently they are developing an electric vehicle roadway at USU so they sought out a program that sells electric car kits and found a fit with the Greenpower Foundation. GEAR UP provided funding for the kits.

This is the third year that high schools and the second year that middle schools in Utah have competed in the Greenpower Challenge.



Gunnison Valley Middle School's Greenpower team, back, from left, Keyton Burtalsen , Alvin Agular, Talmage Jensen, Spencer Overly and Josh Barlow. Front, from left, Brock Overly, Abby Anderson (in car) and Lily Huber, Photo courtesy of Randon Anderson



The Ephraim Middle School Greenpower team (from left) are: Tim Black, adviser, Ashton Hirschi, Mathew Olsen, Kaden Owens, Keegan Merrill, Kaulin Nielsen, Tiffanie Baker, USU STARS! GEAR UP site coordinator. Photo courtesy of Tiffanie Baker.