2025 CBMP Midstream Essay Contest Winners Named

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi's Coastal Bend Midstream program (CBMP) and Howard Energy Partners (HEP) are pleased to announce the winners of the inaugural CBMP Midstream Essay Contest. The essay assignment, titled *"The Future of the Midstream Industry", w*as open to all undergraduate and graduate students at all four-year public universities in Texas. The essay competition primarily sought the perspectives from students enrolled in degree programs in the colleges of Business, Engineering, and Arts & Sciences, but students from all disciplines were encouraged to submit essays. Topics were wide-ranging and included, but were not limited to, corporate finance and structure, capital markets, engineering, operations, regulation, legal matters, and human capital.

Generally, the midstream industry gathers, processes, fractionates, transports via pipelines, and stores oil, natural gas, natural gas liquids (NGLs), and NGL fractionated products such as propane, ethane, and butane. The industry ultimately collects raw hydrocarbons from oil and gas fields (upstream) and delivers them to consumers, including refiners, petrochemical plants, heavy industry, and retail and residential consumers (downstream). The broad range of eligible degree programs and essay topics was designed not only to expose students across many degree programs and interests to the midstream industry, but also to identify and highlight unique perspectives from tomorrow's leaders.

The 2025 winners of the CBMP Midstream Essay Contest:

Joshua Jang
PhD Candidate (2027)
Texas A&M University
College Station

Hrishitva Patel
PhD Candidate (2027)
University of Texas
San Antonio

Ashton Reitzel
BSEE (2026)
Texas A&M University
Corpus Christi

The winners will receive cash prizes of $3,000, $2,000, and $1,000 for first, second, and third place, respectively.

Thomas Kalb, Director of CBMP, said, "We were pleased with the participation in our inaugural midstream essay contest and are honored and extremely appreciative of Howard Energy Partners' support and sponsorship of this essay competition. This essay contest is an excellent opportunity for college students to learn more about the midstream energy business and risk management."

Mitch Smolik, VP, Engineering at Howard Energy Partners, commented, "I'm encouraged seeing how the winners tackled instrumentation, leadership, and even debated industry safety statistics with courage and care — always asking how humans and AI can work better together. That mindset is how we deliver the energy people rely on today and ensure our energy future."

Howard Energy Partners is a privately held American midstream energy infrastructure company headquartered in San Antonio, Texas**.** It was founded in 2011 and has grown into one of the nation's larger private operators in the midstream sector, with additional corporate offices including one in Houston, Texas**.**

CBMP is a midstream-focused educational and research program housed in the College of Engineering and Computer Science at TAMU-CC. Learn about CBMP at cbmp.tamucc.edu/.