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CHARLOTTE, N.C., June 16, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- Nucor Corporation (NYSE: NUE), the largest producer of steel and steel products in the U.S. and North America's largest recycler, recently concluded its Strength of Steel Challenge with an awards ceremony in Charlotte.

The Nucor Strength of Steel Challenge launched on February 22, 2011, during National Engineers Week. The Challenge is an effort to encourage middle and high school students to consider STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) disciplines as a course of study and career choice.

Currently, students in the United States perform below students from other industrialized countries on international tests of math and science. This presents serious challenges to future economic growth and employment since jobs requiring STEM degrees are projected to increase four times as fast as overall job growth. Nucor recognizes the need for STEM curriculum and associated skills in order to build the talent required to rebuild America's manufacturing base.

"Nucor has long tradition of supporting educational initiatives. We firmly believe that having a strong educational system around science and engineering is good for the future of our country, our economy and our company," said Dan DiMicco, Nucor Corporation Chairman and CEO. "This program teaches students about the steel industry while encouraging innovation, thereby creating a strong future workforce."

The competition invited middle and high school students ages 12 through 18 from Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Nebraska, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Utah to participate. Entrants worked in teams of two to four to create a structure out of recycled steel that could be used to support another object or objects in the home, school or vehicle.

Eight semi-finalist teams were flown to Nucor's headquarters in Charlotte, N.C. where they presented their inventions to Nucor executives on June 10. The winning team -- Jared Knobbe, 17, and Steven Fish, 18, from Imperial, Nebraska -- received the \$3000 Nucor Future Engineers Champion Award. Their teacher, Kim Wilson from Chase County School, was awarded \$250.

Nucor worked with By Kids For Kids Co., a leader in youth innovation programs, to develop educational in-school activities for science teachers in the selected states to inspire their students to learn about steel and its importance in our lives, and to offer an opportunity for students to test their knowledge through competition. Nucor hopes to inspire students to think about careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). To learn more about the semi-finalist teams, their inventions and the program visit www.strengthofsteelchallenge.com .

By Kids for Kids® (BKFK®) is a platform that empowers youth invention, innovation and entrepreneurship. BKFK promotes youth social innovation and partners with leading corporations to inspire product development, crucial technology skills, invention, and innovation in young people from 8 to 22. BKFK provides a unique platform for young people to develop, showcase, and commercialize their products, inventions and entrepreneurship. BKFK's "cycle of innovation" develops critical 21st Century skills in our nation's youth. The company provides educational resources -- curriculum and challenges that promote social change, product development and entrepreneurial endeavors. Learn more: www.bkfk.com .

Headquartered in Charlotte, N.C., Nucor and affiliates are manufacturers of steel products, with operating facilities primarily in the U.S. and Canada. Products produced include: carbon and alloy steel - in bars, beams, sheet and plate; steel joists and joist girders; steel deck; fabricated concrete reinforcing steel; cold finished steel; steel fasteners; metal building systems; light gauge steel framing; steel grating and expanded metal; and wire and wire mesh. Nucor, through The David J. Joseph Company, one of the leading scrap companies in the U.S., also brokers ferrous and nonferrous metals, pig

iron and HBI/DRI; supplies ferro-alloys; and processes ferrous and nonferrous scrap. Nucor is North America's largest recycler.

SOURCE Nucor Corporation

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