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**Annual Spaghetti Bridge Building Contest attracting Heavyweights**

The HMA Architects Inc. Heavyweight Competition at OUC's 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Spaghetti Bridge Building Contest is drawing interest from around the world with entries from Iran, the Netherlands, Hungary, and for the first time the Czech Republic.

Jitka Pucandlova, a first-year student in the Faculty of Architecture at the Technical University of Liberec, will be crossing the Atlantic to compete in the contest Friday, March 4 at the North Kelowna Campus Recreation Centre. While the contest has long been a popular draw locally, its international reputation seems to be growing each year with the reintroduction of the heavyweight competition.

HMA Architects Inc. came forward to sponsor the event last year after OUC was forced to drop it from the annual competition due to financial constraints and the need for a more advanced testing apparatus. "HMA stepped up last year so that we could bring this crowd favorite back and the response was great," says contest organizer Peter Murray, who is an associate professor in the Physics and Astronomy department. "With their support and the development of a new load application machine, the heavyweight category is once again proving to be a big draw this year."

HMA is also contributing \$2,000 towards scholarships and bursaries available to students who participate in the Spaghetti Bridge Building contest who plan to continue their studies at the new Okanagan College.

"We are pleased to support OUC and students in this way," says Art Huber, one of the firm's partners. "We hope the event will inspire young people to apply their creativity and ingenuity to the principles of physics and engineering and put their skills to the ultimate test in the heavyweight competition."

Heavyweight competitors will be vying for \$3,000 in prize money (\$1,500 – 1<sup>st</sup> place; \$1,000 – 2<sup>nd</sup> place; and \$500 – 3<sup>rd</sup> place). The record to beat was set at last year's competition by Matyas Kuttyik of the Budapest Polytechnic. His bridge held a load of 256.13 kg before succumbing to the pressure.

“There is a lot of drama and creativity involved in the heavyweight competition,” says Dr. Andrew Hay, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering Technologies. “Bridge design possibilities are endless and you can hear a pin drop in the gym when contestants put those designs to the test. It’s fascinating for participants and spectators alike.”

The competition is open to secondary and post-secondary students only, says Hay. “We challenge our students, as well as those from other post-secondary institutions and high schools, to come up with an innovative design that can beat the current record.”

The ultimate judge will be the “Fettucine Faultline”, the testing apparatus designed and built by OUC instructor Henry Murphy with the help of Fender’s Autobody & Paint.

“We wouldn’t be able to put on a competition of this caliber year after year without the support of the local community and the efforts of the many volunteers,” says Hay. Some of the other supporters of this year’s competition include: the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of B.C., the Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of B.C., the OUC Faculty Association and the OUC Student Association – Kelowna.

There will also be a timed, team building competition for students on the day of the contest, as well as separate competitions for secondary and post-secondary students who want to build bridges at home or school and bring them in to be judged. Elementary School children can also participate in the Demonstration Category by building a replica of the Okanagan Lake floating bridge using pasta or other materials of their choice.

Rules and entry forms for all competitions are available on the website at <http://technologies.ouc.bc.ca/bridge> or by contacting contest organizers at 250-862-5473.

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For more information about the contest, contact Peter Murray at 762-5445, ext. 7514 or Dianne Powles at 862-5473 or visit the website at <http://technologies.ouc.bc.ca/bridge>.

For more information about the HMA Architects Inc. Scholarship or Bursary, contact the OUC Foundation, 470-6091.