



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Cedar Ridge High School rising seniors Cole Leesnitzer, Elias Schultz and Tyler Spierdowis and instructor Keith Yow show off the awards won at the 2011 Fresh Wood Student Competition at the Association of Woodworking & Furnishing Suppliers' Fair in Las Vegas last month.

## CRHS students take home honors at woodworking fair

From staff reports

The best of woodworking's next generation was celebrated at the 2011 Fresh Wood Student Competition at the Association of Woodworking & Furnishings Suppliers' Fair in Las Vegas from July 20 to 23.

A combination of incredible technical skills and dedication paid off for Cedar Ridge High School students. Instructor Keith Yow and three rising seniors—Elias Schultz, Tyler Spierdowis and Cole Leesnitzer from the school's advanced furniture and cabinet-making class—returned with top honors from the competition. Six entry classes attracted more than 160 entries from both post-secondary and high schools in the United States and Canada. Judges—ranging from woodworkers to educators, retail and trade companies and editors of national trade publications—reviewed entries based on the design and innovation, craftsmanship and quality

of presentation, the use of materials, methods and processes. Forty-one finalists were chosen to attend the show and compete for the top prizes.

Schultz received first place and a \$1,000 prize in the case work category with "Bombe'cious," a non-traditional Bombe chest. Taking second place in the casework category along with a \$500 prize was Spierdowis. The arched legs on Leesnitzer's original design "Bent on Walnut" table presented a major challenge for him, but placed him third (honorable mention and a \$250 prize) in the table category. Yow also took home the outstanding instructor award and a new planer for the school donated by Rikon. All three young men said they credit Yow for his patience, encouragement and outstanding instruction during their three years of furniture-making classes.

Cedar Ridge students have brought home national first-place honors in all six previous competitions. One

of the goals of Freshwood, a non-profit agency, is to create a better bridge between industry and education and decrease the gap in current industry needs that continues to widen due to decreased vocational support. AWFS covered shipping and the majority of travel and hotel costs to bring the students, teachers and projects to the fair.

While at the tradeshow, the students attended workshops and demonstrations and had the opportunity to meet and network with all types of companies in the woodworking industry. Connections were made between the students and college program instructors as well as national woodworking TV show hosts and magazine and web editors. In addition, all three students tested, passed and were certified by the Woodwork Career Alliance on both the table saw and jointer. The students also had the pleasure of watching the belt sander races on the first day of the show.