



# ***NEWS RELEASE***

**Illinois Environmental Protection Agency**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Illinois EPA Announces Annual Environmental Education Competition for Fifth & Sixth Grade Students *2018 Program Encourages Youth Creativity to Protect Environment and Honoring the State's Bicentennial***

SPRINGFIELD — Fifth and sixth grade writers and artists from around Illinois are invited to compete in this year's Poster, Poetry and Prose Contest sponsored by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA). This year's contest theme is *Illinois is Celebrating 200 Years! How Can You Be an Environmental Pioneer?* focusing on helping to preserve and protect our air, land and water for the next 200 years in honor of Illinois's bicentennial. Educators are asked to introduce historic environmental problems and how Illinois laws and citizen actions have helped make a healthier environment. Students are challenged to answer the question, "What would a modern environmental pioneer do to ensure Illinois has a sustainable future?".

Each school can enter up to eight works, four posters and four written. Entries must be postmarked and sent in to the Illinois EPA by February 1, 2018. An in-house panel from the Illinois EPA will judge all entries to select the finalists, whose entries are then judged by an outside panel of authorities to determine the top twelve winners. The top winning entries will be on exhibit in the atrium of the Illinois EPA's headquarters building in Springfield from April 23 through May 21, and the top winners will be featured on the Illinois EPA's homepage at [www.epa.illinois.gov](http://www.epa.illinois.gov).

All finalists, together with their families and teachers, are invited to an awards ceremony and reception that will be held on April 21, 2018 at the Old State Capitol Historic Site in Springfield. After the awards ceremony, participants are invited to attend the City of Springfield's Earth Awareness Fair on the Old State Capitol's lawn.

Information about the annual event can be obtained on Illinois EPA's website at: <http://www.epa.illinois.gov/topics/education/contest/index>, or by contacting Kristi Morris, Environmental Education Coordinator for the Illinois EPA, at 217-558-7198, or by mail at 1021 North Grand Avenue E., P.O. Box 19276, Springfield, IL 62794-9276. Information on the Bicentennial Celebration can be found on the following website: <https://illinois200.com/>.

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