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1500+ TEENS SHOWCASE STEM EDUCATION SKILLS AT FIRST® ROBOTICS COMPETITION IN LOS ANGELES.

Students Learn Problem Solving and Teamwork in Addition to Designing and Building Robots at The Los Angeles FIRST Robotics Competition, March 22-23, 2013

[Los Angeles, CA, March 18, 2013] — The Los Angeles First Robotics Competition, Sponsored by the Roddenberry Foundation, will take place on March 22-23rd at the Long Beach Arena in Long Beach, California. Over 1500 students from 66 high school teams will be competing with their robots including a team from Chile. Dubbed a "varsity sport of the mind," FRC combines the excitement of sport with the rigors of science and technology. Under strict rules, limited resources and a six-week time limit, students are challenged to raise funds, build and program a life-size robot and learn about teamwork.

This year's game, ULTIMATE ASCENT is played by two competing alliances on a flat, 27 x 54 foot field. Each Alliance consists of three robots, and they compete to score as many discs into their goals as they can during a two (2)-minute and fifteen (15)-second match. The higher the goal in which the disc is scored, the more points the Alliance receives. The match begins with a fifteen (15)-second Autonomous Period in which robots operate independently of driver inputs. Discs scored during this period are worth additional points. For the remainder of the match, drivers control robots and try to maximize their alliance score by scoring as many goals as possible. The match ends with robots attempting to climb up pyramids located near the middle of the field. Each robot earns points based on how high it climbs.

The FIRST Robotics Competition is an exciting, multinational competition where teams of professionals and high school students work together to solve an engineering design problem in an intense and competitive way. The program is a life-changing, career-molding experience and a lot of fun. This year, the national competitions will reach more than 51,000 students on over 2,500 teams in competitions held across the USA and in other parts of the world. The teams come from Brazil, Canada, Chile, Israel, Mexico, the Netherlands, the U.K., and every state in the U.S. The competitions are high-tech spectator sporting events, the result of lots of focused brainstorming, real-world teamwork, dedicated mentoring, project timelines, and deadlines.

A number of dignitaries and public figures from across the nation have also been involved in putting the spotlight on FIRST, including President Obama and Grammy-award winning artist/producer and Los Angeles native Wil.i.am. Wil.i.am has traveled to the FIRST World Championships where he said, “Educating our youth and getting them equipped for tomorrow - scientists, mathematicians, engineers, programmers - that is the new rock and roll.” Ultimately, the robot is just a vehicle for spreading the message of FIRST, which is to inspire a culture change, where being smart is the new “cool”. According to founder and inventor Dean Kamen, FIRST is dedicated to "creating a world where the wonder of science is celebrated and young people dream of becoming science and technology heroes". As part of this culture change, FIRST works hard to curb drop out rates and add meaning and interest to science and technology as title sponsor Roddenberry Foundation's founder Eugene "Rod" Roddenberry explains. "FIRST’s programs also help students from all backgrounds to remain in school when they might otherwise drop-out or simply lose interest, and also answers their continual question, “Why do we have to learn this?” The Roddenberry Foundation greatly values its new relationship with FIRST Robotics and the incredible students it serves."

The public is invited to attend this free, high-energy, event. In addition to watching matches, spectators of all ages are invited to join teams on the arena floor to get up close with the robots, visit the teams, and see their engineering know-how firsthand! The fun is all happening March 22nd, 8:30am - 6:30pm and March 23rd- 8:30am - 5:30pm. Attendees are encouraged to come and go as they wish during this two-day event. The Long Beach Arena is located at 300 East Ocean Blvd, Long Beach, CA 90802 and charges $10 for parking.

ABOUT FIRST

Accomplished inventor Dean Kamen founded FIRST® (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) in 1989 to inspire an appreciation of science and technology in young people. Based in Manchester, N.H., FIRST designs accessible, innovative programs to build self-confidence, knowledge, and life skills while motivating young people to pursue opportunities in science, technology, and engineering. With support from three out of every five Fortune 500 companies and more than $16 million in college scholarships, the not-for-profit organization hosts the FIRST® Robotics Competition (FRC®) and FIRST® Tech Challenge (FTC®) for high-school students, FIRST® LEGO® League (FLL®) for 9 to 14- year-olds, (9 to 16-year-olds outside the U.S. and Canada) and Junior FIRST® LEGO® League (Jr.FLL) for 6 to 9-year-olds. FIRST supports the idea of Gracious Professionalism which is a way of doing things that encourages high-quality work, emphasizes the value of others, and respects individuals and the community.

ABOUT THE RODDENBERRY FOUNDATION

The title sponsor for the Los Angeles FIRST Robotics Regional is The Roddenberry Foundation. They are helping FIRST to expand new frontiers in science and technology education and helping youth to reach their full potential. The Roddenberry Foundation funds innovative solutions to critical global issues in the areas of science and technology, the environment, education and humanitarian advances. http://roddenberryfoundation.org/

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