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## HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS FROM THE GREATER PITTSBURGH AREA TEST THEIR DESIGN AND ENGINEERING SKILLS AT *FIRST*<sup>®</sup> ROBOTICS COMPETITION – “RECYCLE RUSH<sup>SM</sup>”

*2015 FIRST Robotics Competition - Greater Pittsburgh Regional, March 5 – 7, 2015*

**Pittsburgh, PA, March 1, 2015** — Pittsburgh-area high-school students will soon join others from six states and Canada to compete using custom-built robots in this year's *FIRST*<sup>®</sup> (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Competition.

Now in its 24<sup>th</sup> season, the *FIRST* Robotics Competition anticipates more than 3,000 teams nationwide and 16 countries around the world to compete in over 100 Regional and District Competitions. More than 1,400 students will compete at the Greater Pittsburgh Regional in the Convocation Center at Cal U this weekend to earn a spot at the *FIRST* Championship to be held April 22-25 at the Edward Jones Dome in St. Louis, Mo. Over 20 awards to recognize team excellence will include: Safety, Quality, Creativity, Industrial Design, Entrepreneurship, Team Spirit, and inspiring others in STEM education.

The 2015 game, RECYCLE RUSH<sup>SM</sup>, is played by two Alliances of three teams each. Alliances compete by trying to score as many points as possible during a two-minute and 30-second match by stacking large totes, topping the stacks with a large recycling garbage can and “cleaning up” by removing pool noodles representing garbage. Additional points can be earned by littering the other Alliance's side of the field with this “garbage.”

Over a six-week timeframe, students work with professional engineering mentors to design and build a robot that solves a problem using a Kit of Parts and a standard set of rules. Once these young inventors create the robot, their teams participate in regional competitions that measure the effectiveness of each robot, the power of collaboration, and the determination of students.

This season, high-school students participating in the *FIRST* Robotics Competition program are eligible to apply for more than \$20 million in scholarships from over 180 scholarship providers. *FIRST* scholarship opportunities exist for all *FIRST* high-school-aged student team members, regardless of the teams' robot performance or competition outcome. For more information see <http://www.usfirst.org/scholarships>.

*FIRST* Robotics Competition - Greater Pittsburgh Regional sponsors and volunteers come from some of the most highly regarded organizations in the area.

“Many companies in our communities have a vested interest in encouraging innovation and inspiring students in STEM fields, and offer funding opportunities ,” Patricia DePra, *FIRST* Regional Director – Western Pennsylvania, said. ““Every year, we see an outstanding level of creativity and technology, problem-solving, teamwork, and entrepreneurship demonstrated by teens from our own home towns. Every year, too, I'm moved by personal stories of students who are planning a new education and career path because of *FIRST*. Moreover, after graduating, many *FIRST* students return to volunteer as team mentors. We are very grateful for our team and event sponsors, who recognize that supporting *FIRST* teams and programs is an investment in our community's future.”

Major sponsors include: *Keystone Sponsors*: Google.org and The Heinz Endowments; *Captains of Innovation*: California University of Pennsylvania; *Inspiration Maker*: Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation; *Friend of the Future*: Made Right Here; and many other corporate, nonprofit, and individual donors. Regional and FRC Team Sponsors provide resources including time and talent from professional mentors, services, equipment, financial contributions, and volunteers.

#### **About *FIRST*<sup>®</sup>**

Accomplished inventor **Dean Kamen** founded *FIRST*<sup>®</sup> (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 over 200 of the Fortune 500 companies and more than \$19 million in college scholarships, the not-for-profit organization hosts the *FIRST*<sup>®</sup> **Robotics Competition** (FRC<sup>®</sup>) for students in Grades 9-12; *FIRST*<sup>®</sup> **Tech Challenge** (FTC<sup>®</sup>) for Grades 7-12; *FIRST*<sup>®</sup> **LEGO<sup>®</sup> League** (FLL<sup>®</sup>) for Grades 4-8; and **Junior *FIRST*<sup>®</sup> LEGO<sup>®</sup> League** (Jr.FLL<sup>®</sup>) for Grades K-3. **Gracious Professionalism<sup>®</sup>** is a way of doing things that encourages high-quality work, emphasizes the value of others, and respects individuals and the community. To learn more about *FIRST*, go to [www.usfirst.org](http://www.usfirst.org).

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