



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Sept. 19, 2007

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**OKC CHOSEN TO HOST REGIONAL ROBOTICS COMPETITION**

*\$100,000 available for Oklahoma high schools to compete*

OKLAHOMA CITY – Amidst a history of hosting NCAA tournaments and Blazers hockey games, the Cox Business Services Convention Center will open its doors to a new kind of competition March 20-22.

For the first time, Oklahoma City has been chosen as the site of the 2008 Oklahoma Regional For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology Robotics Competition.

FIRST challenges blend the exhilaration of athletic competition with engineering to create a one-of-a-kind sport for the mind.

“QUOTE,” said Bank of Oklahoma Vice Chairman Burns Hargis.

In May, the Oklahoma State Legislature appropriated \$100,000 to establish robotics projects in high schools in House Bill 1133.

Research has shown that FIRST Robotics Competition participants are 35 percent more likely to attend college and nearly twice as likely to major in science or engineering. In addition, competitors are more than twice as likely to perform community service.

Of the 20 fastest-growing occupations projected through 2010, 15 of them will require substantial mathematics or science preparation, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In addition, degrees in engineering rank among the top five most sought after associate's, bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees, according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers' 2007 Job Outlook.

Established in 1989 by inventor Dean Kamen, FIRST is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to motivating young people to engage in educational and career opportunities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

More than 40 teams of 15 to 25 high-school students will compete in the regional event. Paired with professional mentors, teams will have six weeks to design and build remote-controlled robots from a common set of basic parts to meet the season's challenge.

The Oklahoma City contest constitutes one of 37 regional competitions preceding the 2008 FIRST Championship at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta April 17-19. Since 1989, the competition has grown from 28 teams to more than 1,300 teams. Teams from 23 countries will compete for \$8 million in scholarships at the season's pinnacle event.

The Oklahoma State Board of Education will award 20 grants of \$5,000 for school districts to implement robotics projects for entry into regional and national competitions. Eligibility is limited to Oklahoma high schools that have not participated in robotics competitions. The deadline to apply is Oct. 15.

“Competition in robotics gives students a reason to get excited about math and science,” State Superintendent of Public Instruction Sandy Garrett said. “Participation will assist in the statewide effort to increase Oklahoma students’ interest and test scores in those subjects.”

For more information, visit [usfirst.org](http://usfirst.org) or the Oklahoma State Department of Education Web site.

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