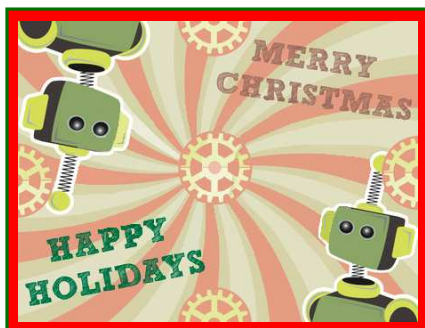


Team Members, Coaches, Mentors, Parents, Sponsors & Friends of FIRST:



Happy Holidays!

For all our friends and for the new ones that we will meet and make this season, Happy Holidays, good luck, and have a safe and enjoyable season!

Heard 'round the FRC.....

"I'm ready for Christmas . . . then second Christmas!!!"

"Build season is the best time of the year. Better than Christmas, because the presents are cooler, and better than New Year's cause you get to stay up later!"

FRC Countdown to Kickoff!

17 DAYS and COUNTING . . .



The Big Day - Saturday, January 7, 2012

Two Kickoff Locations!

The Peoria Kickoff will be held in Bradley's recently completed Renaissance Coliseum located at 1600 W. Main Street, from 7:30 AM - 1:00 PM (CST). Chicago's Kickoff will be held at the Illinois Institute of Technology - Hermann Hall, 3241 South Federal St., from 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM (CST). For more details on the events, visit the Illinois FIRST FRC web site:

http://www.ilfrc.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=13&Itemid=17.

NASA TV

Can't make it to one of the Local Kickoffs? Planning for the team getting together to watch the telecast? Thanks to our friends at NASA the Kickoff will be broadcast on NASA TV - **January 7, 2012, 10 a.m. (Eastern)**. Check your local cable, Dish, satellite listings, or for more information on NASA TV, go to: http://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/nasatv/MM_NTV_Breaking.html.

Also you can watch the NASA TV Kickoff broadcast on your computer using Flash, Windows or QuickTime at:

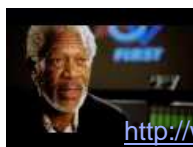
<http://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/nasatv/index.html>.

Are You Prepared?

(excerpts from Bill's Blogs and Team Email Blasts)

- Before you go or watch the broadcast, form a Kickoff plan and checklist. Who will be attending? Who will sign the team in at the Kickoff and sign for the kit of parts? Who will download the encrypted game manual? Who is responsible for inventorying the kit of parts? Who will complete the replacement parts section in TIMS before the deadline? Etc....etc...
- Everyone attending a FRC Kickoff must provide a signed Consent and Release Form in order to enter. You must also bring a printout of your Team Roster from TIMS. Don't arrive without one. For more details, go to <http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/first-student-team-information-members-system-and-consent-form>.
- Teams from previous years suggest you secure a meeting place, obtain tools and start meeting with your team NOW. Once the game is revealed, you won't have time to think about anything other than design and build. More details are available in the FRC Handbook: http://www.usfirst.org/uploadedFiles/Community/FRC/Team_Resources/FRC_Handbook.pdf.
- Read - Know - Review - and Read Again the Administrative Sections of the Manual (<http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/competition-manual-and-related-documents>), the Team Email Blasts (<http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/emailblastarchive.aspx>) and Bill's Blog (<http://frcdirector.blogspot.com/>) so that you and your team are up-to-date and in-the-know on all the current season and game related official information! As the season goes forward, this is of the utmost importance!

Two GREAT Get Psyched Videos!



Morgan Freeman - FIRST Promo

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6lbonBBnARK&list=LL02y4Wv89OTj671KdbxCOdg&index=10&feature=plpp_video?



History of FIRST

Made by our friends on the Ha-Dream Team # 3075
- Hod HaSharon, Israel

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUHsAkY_3ow

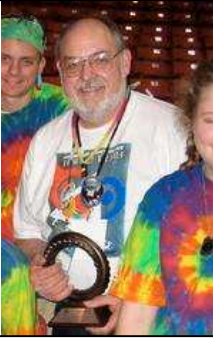
So you're all set and ready to go for Kickoff. Assignments have been made - details have been taken care of - all items on your to-do list have been checked off. But it's not time yet. What to do now...?

Advice from Al . . . Al's Woodie Flowers Reminder

To all Students....

While you are all getting excited waiting for kickoff but have nothing to do, this is a great time to plan and compose your Woodie Flowers submission. You can find the full document on the FIRST web site but here is a pertinent excerpt.

Al Skierkiewicz,
Engineering
Mentor FRC
Team #111
and 2005
Midwest
Regional
Woodie
Flowers Finalist
Award winner



Entry Requirements

The students enter team and candidate information, reference information, and a maximum three thousand (3,000) character essay written in English. Teams may also add up to six (6) pictures, totaling no more than 1.0 Mb. of memory. This essay should be a team effort and will stand alone as the team's entry to award their candidate the deserved recognition.

For students to re-nominate a past WFFA winner for the Championship WFA, they must write and submit a new three thousand (3,000) character essay.

Teams may only submit their WFFA candidate at one Regional competition for judging.

Submission Deadline

The Woodie Flowers Award entries are due by NOON EST on Thursday, Feb. 16, 2012.

You can find the full document here... <http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/awards>

There is no greater reward for a mentor than to be nominated by the students on his/her team. So many great adult leaders miss the chance for this recognition. Take the time now and finish before kickoff gets here. It's only a month away.

PR and Marketing Teams

Are you ready for Kickoff? New batteries in your cameras and video recorders? Pencils sharpened or typing fingers limbered up? It's time to put on those creative thinking caps! Now is the time you should be discussing, outlining, planning and detailing the team Marketing, Branding and Publicity strategy for the upcoming season. Do you realize just how important your job is to the team? Remember your marketing department is more than just buttons - it is what will define the image of your team! Here is an excerpt from NEMO's "Publicity FIRST Manual" ...

"Publicity is how your team gets funding, members, advisors, mentors, resources...This is a case of tooting your own horn. People will never know what great things you accomplish unless you tell them, and that includes using articles to promote the team and FIRST, recruit new students, advertise for events, appeal for engineers, appeal for resources. In a broad sense, even the FIRST Chairman's Award submission is a form of team publicity. You're showcasing and promoting both the best features of your team and FIRST objectives and goals." ...

This manual, along with NEMO's "FIRST Publicity Tips", are excellent resources and guides filled with timeless ideas and examples for publicity, marketing and PR. You can find them both on FIRST NEMO's Resource page <http://www.firstnemo.org/resources.htm>, along with other great articles / presentations like: "Communicating with the Community", "Branding, Public Relations, Sponsorships", and etc.

True, it's hard to do any thing like demonstrations during build season, but how about things like the whole team attending a basketball game wearing team shirts and sitting as a group? Having a Bake Sale during school lunch hours will not only raise a few dollars, but also increase your team's visibility within the school. Document your season in pictures / videos, articles and send out updates to your sponsors and donors and of course to us at ilfrc4u@gmail.com. Have an open house for sponsors, donors, community / business leaders in order to show them the build process first-hand. Or even make them a VSP (very special person), invite them to your Regional, give them a tour, maybe a VSP button with your team's name, take a picture of them with the robot / team to give to them later. . . and so on . . . and so on . . . and so on . . .with some imagination, teamwork, and brainstorming - the possibilities are endless!

Take the Obama Challenge! - Are you Game?

The President has demonstrated that he is a great advocate of FIRST, but what's with his always visiting East Coast teams? What about those of us here in your home State or your hometown, Mr. President? So who is ready to take on the Challenge of getting President Obama to visit FIRST teams the next time he's back home in Illinois? Hmmm... How about his coming to the Midwest Regional? Accept the Obama Challenge as an individual team, or partner up with another team. Keep us posted on your progress by email and definitely let us know if we can help you in any way! Email us at: ilfrc4u@gmail.com .

Team Registration has officially ended and Illinois has a total of 56 registered teams within the state. 16 Rookie Teams from Illinois and 2 from Northwest Indiana will be joining our *FIRST* Family this year! Here is a list of who they are and what Regionals they will be attending:

# 4096 - Ctrl-Z	Champaign	Midwest	# 4232 - AHS	Alton	St. Louis
# 4129 - Global Citizenship Experience	Chicago	Midwest	# 4245 - Resurrected Robotics	Troy	St. Louis
# 4143 - M/W ARS	Metamora	Wisconsin	# 4241 - best	Joilet	Midwest
# 4156 - Team Cyclones	Springfield	St. Louis	# 4292 - Porter Bots	Lockport	Midwest
# 4187 - Roborams	Mt. Vernon	St. Louis	# 4296 - Blue Devil Builders	Gurnee	Wisconsin
# 4196 - QAVTC Devils	Quincy	St. Louis	# 4302 - Robo-aliens	Chicago	Midwest
# 4212 - Knox County FRC	Galesburg	Midwest	# 4314 - SUL	Springfield	Midwest
# 4213 - MetalCow	Bloomington	Midwest	# 4324 - HTA	Decatur	Midwest
# 3936 - WWW	Michigan City	Midwest	# 4081 - Metal Masters	East Chicago	Midwest

So veteran teams, remember what it was like your rookie year? Pretty daunting...huh? See any rookies that are in or close to your area? See any rookies attending a Regional that you have competed in? How about dashing off an email welcoming the new team to Illinois (and Northwest Indiana) *FIRST* FRC, introducing yourself and letting them know that if they have any questions, need advice, tips or an overview of what to expect during build and competition, etc, you'll be happy to give them a hand. Hey how about becoming E-Pals? Some of the new teams may have their web sites up and running - just Google them. Or contact Illinois Senior Mentor Keith Hall at khall@usfirst.org and ask him to make an introduction for you. For a complete listing of this year's registered Illinois (and Northwest Indiana) *FIRST* FRC teams, go to: http://www.ilfrc.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2&Itemid=2.

Midwest Regional March 22 - 24 Update!

53 Registered Teams! Mexico, Arkansas, Kansas, Texas, Ohio, Indiana and (of course) Illinois will have teams attending! Once again LogoLoc will be handling the Midwest Regional commemorative t-shirts and merchandise - look for a few new items that may be added this year. Their web site is up and running and as soon as the game is announced, they will feature the new 2012 design with the new game logo!

Details on the Midwest Poster contest have been Email Blasted out to the participating teams. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask - just email us at ilfrc4u@gmail.com, with "Poster Question" in the subject line.

Be sure to keep checking the web site http://www.ilfrc.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6&Itemid=6 for updated Midwest Regional information as it happens.

Community Outreach Events



71 - The B.E.A.S.T. Entertains the Crowd at a LEGO Qualifier



LEGO Demos at FTC State Champs

2949 - pwanage Demos at FTC State Champs



3936 - Michigan City participates in "Made in LaPorte" Expo at the Mall



Important Dates & Info

• January 6, 2012 FRC Kickoff Workshops!

The 2012 FIRST Robotics Competition Kickoff Workshops will be held at FIRST Headquarters in Manchester, on Fri., January 6th. The purpose of these workshops is to provide teams the opportunity to learn from other teams, mentors, supporters, and suppliers. **Recordings:** It is planned that Workshop recordings will be uploaded and available to view on the weekend of Kickoff. Check here for updates, <http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/firstplace/2012frckickoffworkshops>.

• January 7, 2012 Kickoff!

Chicago Kickoff! - 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM (CST) - **Peoria Kickoff!** - 7:30 AM - 1:00 PM (CST)

**** NOTE** - Be sure to check and verify that the information hasn't changed.

- **01/03 - Surrogate Kit Pickup paperwork** to FIRST - Submit by NOON (EST) to: frc@usfirst.org
- **01/09 - OPEN - Missing Parts Reporting** (from KOP) - NOON (EST)
- **01/13 - CLOSE - Missing Parts Reporting** (from KOP) - NOON (EST)
- **02/21 - STOP BUILD!**
- **02/26 - CLOSE - Award Submissions** for FIRST Dean's List, Chairman's, Woodie Flowers and Web site - NOON (EST)
- **03/01-3/03 - Week 1 Regionals** - Kansas City, BAE, Smoky Mountain, Alamo, San Diego (3/02-04)
- **03/08-3/10 - Week 2 Regionals** - Orlando, WPI, Chesapeake, Lake Superior, Finger Lakes, AutoDesk, Pittsburgh
- **03/15-3/17 - Week 3 Regionals** - Sacramento, Los Angeles, Peachtree, Boilermaker, Bayou, Utah, Virginia, NY (3/16-18)
- **03/22-3/24 - Week 4 Regionals** - Midwest, Wisconsin, St. Louis, Colorado, Hawaii, Boston, Buckeye, Palmetto, Seattle
- **03/29-3/31 - Week 5 Regionals** - Silicon Val, Connecticut, DC, S Florida, 1000 Lakes, Northstar, SBPLI, Oklahoma, Dallas
- **04/05-4/07 - Week 6 Regionals** - Central Val, N. Carolina, Las Vegas, Queen City, Lone Star, Spokane
- **04/26-4/28 - FIRST Championship - St. Louis, Missouri**
- **FIRST Scholarship News** - Very important 12/15/11 Scholarship Newsletter filled with new and updated information! TIMS Contacts: Please pass this newsletter on to your students, parents, and high school guidance counselors! ([http://www.usfirst.org/sites/default/files/uploadedFiles/About Us/Scholarships/2012 Assets/FIRST%20Scholarship%20News%2012-15-11.pdf](http://www.usfirst.org/sites/default/files/uploadedFiles/About%20Us/Scholarships/2012%20Assets/FIRST%20Scholarship%20News%2012-15-11.pdf)).

• IIT Boeing Scholars Academy Now Available!



This free, year-round academic enrichment program offers: • Hands-on summer experiences in STEM fields as well as in architecture, business, and psychology. • Periodic workshops during the school year • College and career advising support • Leadership skills training. High school sophomores and juniors interested in joining

the 2012-13 IIT Boeing Scholars Academy should apply by Tuesday, January 31, 2012. Find full detailed information at <http://admission.iit.edu/boeingscholars>. Questions? Email - Marya Spont at spont@iit.edu or call at 312-567-5193.

• Excerpts from Bill's Blog:

* **Have you ever volunteered at a FRC event?** Do you want to volunteer again? While teams are preparing for Kickoff, Volunteer Coordinators are hard at work planning the 2012 FRC Events. If you want to be one of the amazing, much appreciated, invaluable volunteers at any of our upcoming competitions, go to www.usfirst.org/vims and register. Pick the events you want to support, indicate your preferences for the kind of help you can provide, and the Volunteer Coordinator will be in touch. It's the hardest fun you can have!

* **FIRST Choice** (<http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/first-choice>) is open for viewing. Never heard of FIRST Choice? Visit my Oct 11th blog, <http://frcdirector.blogspot.com/>. Not every item is visible right now. Some will be added as we finalize details with suppliers, and others will be added after Kickoff (we don't want give away too much information regarding the game or the rules). However, now is an excellent time to familiarize yourself with the site before the season starts in earnest. Watch the kickoff broadcast closely for more details about FIRST Choice and if you have questions, please don't hesitate to post on the **FIRST Choice Forum** (<http://forums.usfirst.org/forumdisplay.php?f=1464>).

* **Email Blasts** - A number of **important Email Blasts** have been sent to team main and alternate contacts in the past week. Dean sent a message about the second generation e-watt saver bulbs, and PTC gave teams access to the software they have donated for the 2012 season. If you haven't seen these emails, remember you can find all Email Blasts, Rookie Alerts and Blog posts on the FRC Team Email Blast Archive page of our web site, (<http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/emailblastarchive.aspx>).

* **Planning for Build Season** - As your team is planning (and if you haven't started to plan for build season, now would be a very good time to do so) make sure you build in a cushion for unexpected delays and setbacks. FRC is not planning to grant extensions to the build season for weather delays. FRC is a microcosm of the real engineering experience. Just like in the business world, your local climate is one of the many elements you must factor into the equation as you set your schedule. Plan now, how will your team handle bad weather, unexpected power outages, cold and flu season, delayed shipments and anything else that might crop up during build season? Businesses have to adjust to unexpected setbacks in order to meet their deadlines. How are you going to respond?

Happenings in Our FIRST Community

Reflections on LEGO

The FIRST Step Toward a Brighter Future

Submitted by: Katie Goodrich - FIRST FRC Team # 71 - Team Hammond

The gym of Indiana University Northwest was packed with kids and adults in brightly colored tee-shirts. Thirty teams of FIRST LEGO Leaguers filled the room with their enthusiastic cheering. Mascots handed out good luck tokens to other competing teams. You could smell the excitement that Food Factor was cooking up.

Future FRC-ers walked around the gym discussing who would talk about what for their Technical presentation, going over how their last match went, and rehearsing their lines for their Research Project presentation. These elementary and middle school students from Northwest Indiana and surrounding areas were gathered for a regional competition that acted as a state qualifier.

The FIRST LEGO League prepares its participants for the higher levels of FIRST thoroughly. All of the jobs on an FRC team are done at this level as well just on a smaller scale. The students build, program, present information, speak with adults, aptly share knowledge, work together as a team, learn about responsibility, and embrace gracious professionalism. The lessons they are learning now will help them later in FIRST but more importantly life.

LEGO coach Sarah Michna says, "First and foremost, we teach gracious professionalism. Yes, winning is fun, but it's more important to learn something along the way." As a former driver for a Championship FRC team, Michna knows how well FIRST can prepare you for later in life. She uses lessons taught to her by her mentors in everyday life. A teacher at Lafayette Elementary School in Hammond, IN, she realizes how hard it was for her coaches, "I have so much respect for what they did. You don't realize how much they do until you have to do it too."

These students have acquired a skill-set far beyond their years that will allow them to excel in any field they choose. Their ability to solve problems in an out-of-the-box way is priceless in today's world. They will have an advantage in any endeavor they select because their minds are trained to face a challenge head on.

FIRST LEGO League is a training ground for kids in all aspects of life. It teaches them methods of communication, mechanical skills, and valuable life lessons. It is a program that takes kids step by step down the path to acquiring all the skills they need to become successful. FLL is the first step toward these students' futures. They are taking their FIRST steps towards a brighter future for us all.



The Illinois State FIRST LEGO League Championship Tournament will be January 21, 2012

Forest View Fieldhouse - 2121 Goebbert Rd. - Arlington Heights - **Open to the Public - Admission is Free!**

For More information on the State Championship, visit the Illinois FIRST LEGO League web site at:

http://insciteillinois.org/?State_Tournament_Information

Mock Kickoff Invitation!

From our Friends in Indianapolis - *Cyber Blue, FRC 234*, has two upcoming events to share with Indiana and Illinois teams.

Beta Test Open House – Tuesday January 3, 6 – 8 PM. We will show what we have learned with the beta testing of new controls hardware and software.

Mock Kick-Off – Tuesday, January 3, 6 – 8 PM. We will present a Mock Kick-Off using an older FIRST game. This event is intended to give those new to FRC some advanced perspective on what to expect at the official kick-off. We will use the game animation and basic rules and step through game breakdown, brainstorming, basic design ideas and design presentations. You will work with other members of your team and have a veteran FIRST member as a mentor. The Mock Kick-Off event is targeted to new teams and / or new team members of existing teams. Both events are at Perry Meridian High School, 401 W. Meridian School Road, Indianapolis. Enter through the Robotics Room doors at the south west corner of the school (under the large "234" sign). Please RSVP to Chris Fultz at chrisfultz@att.net so the team knows how many to plan for for each event.

Rookie Workshop in Peoria!

Submitted by Lisa Diaz

Seven New FRC Rookie Teams! A workshop was held on Nov. 20th at Caterpillar in Peoria for seven (7) rookie, jcp-supported, 4-H teams.

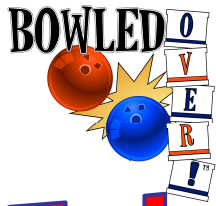
Team # 1736 - Robot Casserole, Team # 240 - DERT -, and Team # 2949 - pwnage shared their experience and helped answer questions. Rookies were also able to see # 1736 and # 240 robots in action on a full-size competition field.

This explosion of new rookie FRC teams was made possible through a jcp grant to the National 4-H Council. 4-H clubs are matched to local jcp stores and plan to collaborate with store associates in their FRC activities.

Rookie 4-H teams in Illinois are located in Forsyth, Champaign-Urbana, Springfield, Alton, Bloomington-Normal, Galesburg and Joliet. Veteran FRC teams that are part of this growing 4-H, jcp-supported network include Team # 3352 - Flaming Monkeys, Team # 648 - QCElite, and Team #2949 - pwnage.

Lisa Diaz is an University of Illinois Extension specialist. Recently Lisa was interviewed by WJBC AM radio -

"New 4-H team will compete in robotics." Read the interview here, <http://wjbc.com/new-4-h-team-will-compete-in-robotics/>.



Illinois State Championship - December 10, 2011 Fabulous FTC Finale!

WOW! What a great event! Thirty-two teams competed at IIT's Hermann Hall for the State title and a chance to go on to the World Championship event taking place April 26-28 in St. Louis, Missouri. Energy was high, the venue was great, the competition was fierce, but most of all every team member, mentor and coach were truly gracious professionals, displaying the *FIRST* spirit of cooperation! A great big THANKS and much appreciation to all of the many volunteers who gave their time and hard work to making this State Competition the best yet! Also special thanks goes out to *FIRST* FRC team # 2949, pwnage and the various *FIRST* FLL teams, whose demonstrations at the event showed parents, spectators and sponsors just how wonderful the *FIRST* FAMILY OF PROGRAMS is! And of course - **CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF THE WINNERS!!**

Award Winners

Inspire Award

Team # 5202 - STAND/Try2 - Decatur, IL

Inspire Award Finalists:

Team # 5037 - got robot? - Elgin, IL

Team # 4507 - RoboChargers - Grand Rapids, MI

Winning Alliance

Team # 4507 - RoboChargers - Grand Rapids, MI

Team # 503 - got robot? - Elgin, IL

Team # 5256 - Spare Parts - Grand Rapids, MI

Finalist Alliance

Team # 3785 - Beastie Bots - Highland Park, IL

Team # 5202 - STAND/Try2 - Decatur, IL

Team # 5199 - Thursdays- Varsity Robotics - Barrington, IL

Think Award

Team # 5199 -Thursdays- Varsity Robotics - Barrington, IL

Connect Award

Team # 535 - TOBOR - Crawfordsville, IN

Rockwell Collins Innovate Award

Team # 4507 - RoboChargers - Grand Rapids, MI

PTC Design Award

Team # 5037 - got robot? - Elgin, IL

Motivate Award

Team # 5072 - Wildcats - Lake Forest, IL

Judges' Award

Team # 5360 - Dignitas - Chicago, IL

Special Congratulations

To the two teams whom will be competing in the
FIRST World Championship event April 26-28,
at the Edward Jones Dome in St. Louis, Missouri!

Team # 4507 - RoboChargers - (Number One Ranked Team)
Covenant Christian High School - Grand Rapids, Michigan

Team # 5202 - STAND/Try2 - (Inspire Award Winner)
4-H Robostorms - Decatur, Illinois

For a complete listing of of Qualifying Tournament and State
Championship Awards, visit the Illinois *FIRST* FTC web site

<http://www.ilftc.org/>



5202 - STAND/Try2

Inspire Award Winner,
Finalist Alliance partner

4507 - RoboChargers

Winning Alliance Captain,
Rockwell Collins Innovate
Award



5037 - got robot?

Winning Alliance Partner,
PTC Design Award

**# 5199 - Thursdays- Varsity
Robotics**

Think Award,
Finalist Alliance partner



FTC Teams on TV News!

Englewood Youth Participate in Ill. Robotics Challenge

Team # 5281 - The E! Team Innovators were interviewed
at State by our Local Chicago ABC news TV news crew
You can read the story and watch the video here:

<http://abclocal.go.com/wls/story?section=news/local&id=8462560>

Local Robotics Team Wins State

Team # 5202 - STAND/Try2 invited their local Decatur, IL
NBC news crew to State. Then later they were invited...

Robotics Team Visits Morning Show

The link for the first video is:

<http://www.wandtv.com/global/Category.asp?c=182814&clid=6551574&topVideoCatNo=99891&autoStart=true>

Then scroll past the fourth page to find the second video
and click on it to view.