

Coaches, Mentors, Team Members & Parents,

October is....

WELCOME MONTH!

We at Illinois FIRST Midwest Regional Planning Committee would like to say “**Welcome Back**” to all returning FRCers and to all rookies we extend a hearty “**Welcome to the Illinois (and Northwest Indiana) FIRST Family!**”

Just like your team, we’ve been having pre-season meetings not only for planning the Midwest Regional, but also for putting into play some programs and ideas that will turn Illinois (and Northwest Indiana) FIRST into a strong, vital community. Initial things that we are working on include instituting an informative, fun monthly newsletter, and an updating and overhaul of both the Illinois FIRST (www.ilfirst.org) and the Illinois (and Northwest Indiana) FRC (www.ilfrc.org) web sites.

So attention all Marketing/PR team members! If you have things that you would like to have added to the newsletter, such as news, fundraising events information, community service / outreach project recaps, photos, video links, etc., send your information to: ilfrc4u@gmail.com.

TIMS Contacts – I’m counting on you to pass the newsletters on to everyone who is on your team’s e-mail distribution list.

Thanks,
Dan



FRC Director, Bill Miller and Dan Green,
Illinois FIRST Director and Midwest
Regional Chairman

Congratulations New FRC Teams!

- #3935 - Robotics Metal Soldiers, Chicago, IL**
- #3936 - Wild Wild Wolves (WWW), Michigan City, IN**
- #4081 - EC Central, East Chicago, IN**
- #4096 - Urbana-Champaign Community Team, Champaign, IL**
- #4129 - Global Citizenship Experience High School, Chicago, IL**

Midwest Regional March 22 - 24!

All roads lead to UIC Pavilion in Chicago for this Week 4, “Grand-Daddy” of all Regionals. So far it looks like once again MWR is going to be a highly competitive, very exciting, and fun regional!

To date, forty-three teams have registered. Two of the 2011 Championship teams will be returning as well as one of the Finalists, plus nine Award Winning teams. Six different states will be represented along with a team traveling all the way from Mexico City! Friendships will be renewed as many old friends and familiar faces will be coming, and with eleven first-timer rookie teams attending, many new friendships will be formed.

Plans, meetings and discussions are currently underway to make the 2012 Midwest Regional the best ever! As soon as things like the agenda, team social, hotels / lodging, merchandise, lunch orders and etc are finalized, they will be communicated to teams and also posted on the MWR web site: http://www.ilfrc.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6&Itemid=6. In the meantime last year’s information has been left on the web site in order to give you an idea of how it was done in the past and to help you with this year’s planning. Also if you have some constructive ideas and/or comments on how we can make MWR, the newsletter and the web site the best, we’d love to hear from you. Just send an email to ilfrc4c@gmail.com with your ideas and suggestions.

New This Year!

You design the 2012 Midwest Regional Poster contest.

- Open to all Illinois & Northwest Indiana FRC teams and those teams attending the MWR.
- One entry per team.
- Entries must be in a .pdf or .jpeg format, scaleable to 8” x 10” and may be autographed.
- Winning entry will be decided by the Midwest Regional Planning Committee
- Winning poster design will be featured on Midwest Regional web site and used by the Regional Planning Committee in the advertising and promotion of MWR. A digital format of the winning poster will be sent to all FRC teams in Illinois, Northwest Indiana and teams attending the MWR for use in their advertising and promotion.

More information and specifics will be sent to teams shortly in a separate e-mail. Meanwhile get those creative juices going!

Happenings in Our FIRST Community

GO... GO... LEGO!



This Year's *FIRST* LEGO Challenge is to improve the quality of food by finding ways to prevent food contamination. Teams will explore the topic of food safety and examine the possible points of contamination that our food encounters - from exposure to insects and creatures, to unsterile processing and transportation, to unsanitary preparation and storage. Then the teams must find ways to prevent or combat these contaminants and present their solutions to the judges. Illinois FLL Qualifying Tournaments have been scheduled for:

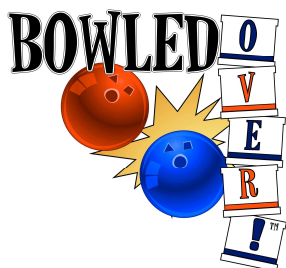


December 3 - Urbana, Harvard and Streator
December 10 - Miles Davis Academy, UIC, Lake Zurich, Peoria, Rockford and Zion
December 17 - Batavia, G.S. Friendship Cntr. in Country Club Hills and Mt. Prospect
December 18 - Quest Academy in Palatine

The Illinois State Championship Tournament will be January 20 & 21, 2012.

Hey teams, now is your chance to be a mentor and a role model! Check with a LEGO team in your area to see if they might need some help. Contact a tournament director – ask if your team could do a demonstration at the event promoting FTC/FRC and your team by showing these young students (and the adults) the next level of *FIRST*. Bring some team buttons (kids will love them) and brochures telling about your team. Maybe you could be volunteers for the event. For more information on *FIRST* LEGO League in Illinois, go to: http://www.ilfirst.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9&Itemid=5.

Phenomenal FTC!



Looks like it is going to be a banner year for Illinois FTC with an exciting game challenge, 53 teams and three Qualifying Tournaments! Definitely be sure to checkout the awesome Kickoff game animation video! <http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/ftc/2011-2012-game-info>.

Qualifying Tournaments are scheduled for:

November 12 – Highland Park High School, Highland Park, IL
November 12 – Malcom X College, Chicago, IL
November 19 – Rotolo Middle School, Batavia, IL

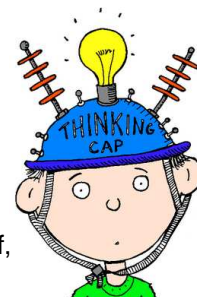
The Illinois FTC Championship will be on December 10, 2012 at IIT, Chicago, IL.

Calling all FRC teams & mentors. Show your support of this exciting program! Attend an event, cheer your team on to victory or better yet become a volunteer at one of the tournaments! For more information visit: <http://www.ilftc.org/>.

FRC Countdown to Kickoff!

74 Days & Counting ... (excerpts from Bill's Blog)

- 1782 FRC teams registered for FRC competition events.
- 793 teams have registered to attend a local kickoff. If you haven't chosen a local kickoff, what are you waiting for? Participating in a local kickoff gives your team an opportunity to connect with other teams in your area.
- Be sure to read the **Bag & Tag FAQ** (<http://www3.usfirst.org/node/1995>) as you plan for the 2012 season.
- If you haven't signed up for your first event yet, do so soon! Registration for second events opens to all teams on Oct 27th and unrestricted registration opens on November 3rd.



"If you need something to do while your team is waiting for Kickoff ..." (See Bill's Blog for October 20th).

Be sure to keep checking *FIRST* FRC Director Bill Miller's Blog for official FRC information and updates on the season and the game! Make it part of a team member's responsibility! <http://frcdirector.blogspot.com/>

Important Dates & Info

Now Posted! — 2012 Safety Animation Contest: The 2012 Safety Animation Contest Announcement, manual & video is posted at: <http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprogr...deo-and-manual>.

- **Kickoff Registration is Open** — Kickoffs are **January 7, 2012** - Register at: <https://my.usfirst.org/frc/tims/>
Chicago Kickoff! — 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM (CST) at the Illinois Institute of Technology - Hermann Hall, 3241 South Federal St., Chicago. The Illinois Institute of Technology will host a 2012 FRC Kickoff Event in the Hermann Hall Union Building on campus. Refreshments will be available for teams before the NASA broadcast. After the broadcast and a short break for lunch, many exciting workshops and brainstorming sessions will be available for teams to take part in. A kit-bot build workshop will also be offered for any teams interested in learning the basics of robot building.
- **Peoria Kickoff!** — 7:30 AM - 1:00 PM (CST). Hosted by the Bradley University College of Engineering and Technology and sponsored by Caterpillar Inc. The kick-off will be held in Bradley's new Renaissance Coliseum located at 1600 W. Main Street, Peoria, Illinois. Parking is available in the adjacent deck. Bradley will offer campus tours for any interested individuals either prior to the 9 AM session or following the kick-off. If interested in a tour, either e-mail Kathy Cobb at kcobb@bradley.edu or call at 309-677-2721.

**** NOTE** - As it gets closer to Kickoff, be sure to check and verify that the above information hasn't changed.

- **10/13** — Champs Registration open for Pre-qualified & Vet teams who **DID NOT** compete at the 2011 Championship.
- **10/27** — 2nd Regional Event Registration opens.
- **10/27** — Champs Registration for Veteran Teams who **DID** compete at the 2011 Championship.
- **11/03** — Unrestricted Regional Event Registration opens.
- **11/10** — Award Submission Opens for FIRST Dean's List, Chairman's, Web site & Woodie Flowers.
- **02/21** — Stop Build.
- **03/22-3/24** — Midwest Regional at UIC Pavilion, Chicago

• **Ask an Expert: Informational Calls for Team, Mentors and Coaches!** Hosted by FIRST Senior Mentors, these informational calls are for everyone! - Rookie/Vet Teams, Mentors and Coaches. The calls are invaluable for those who are new to FIRST as well as those needing to brush up on their skills.

Next call: **10/27/2011** - 6 PM CST - FRC Call - Topic: Scholarships - "Be prepared for your next move and arm yourself with valuable information on FIRST Scholarship Opportunities!" For a schedule of upcoming FRC calls, go to: http://www.usfirst.org/community/volunteers/fsm_training_calls. Also all of the prior training calls have been recorded and are available for listening. For FRC recorded calls, go to: <http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/frc-senior-mentor-teleconference-recordings>

• **VIMS Registration is Now Open!** — Being a Volunteer at a Regional is not only a lot of fun, it's also a great way to meet terrific fellow FIRSTers! Sign up today at: https://my.usfirst.org/FIRSTPortal/Login/VIMS_Login.aspx.

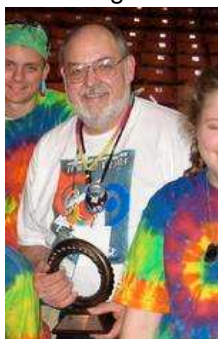
• **CKShare Robotics Community - Chicago Knights Sharing Help, Resources, and Education!**

Team #1739, Chicago Knights, invites you to participate in their public meeting place where registered FIRST community members can all communicate using a shared calendar, discussion forums, photo gallery, and more. It is a respectful and supportive site where teams can gather to inform, encourage and strengthen each other - but most of all, it is a place for all of us involved with FIRST robotics programs to SHARE with each other.

Visit: <http://ck2009robotickickoff.groupsite.com/main/summary>.

So what is your team doing this fall besides counting down the days until The Game is revealed on January 7? Recruiting team members? Finding sponsors and donors? Having or holding workshops? Teambuilding exercises or projects? Demonstrations? Community service projects? Fundraising? Hosting or attending an off-season competition? Volunteering at other FIRST events? Branding & Marketing your team and Public Relations?

Here are some great suggestions from Al Skierkiewicz, Engineering Mentor FRC Team #111 and 2005 Midwest Regional Woodie Flowers Finalist Award winner, that apply to all teams – first-year rookies through 20-year veterans.



"There is nothing like building a robot and doing some team building exercises in the fall. Using an established program gives you a minimum of added work designing a program. A minimum would be using either FLL or FTC to build a small robot and start programming. ...you can use the rulebooks and the game to start brainstorming sessions, design processes, etc. You can use any of the Science Olympiad stuff to foster team building. See who can make a structure that reaches a certain height in the least amount of time. Anything you can do to get kids to start to recognize each other and think they are part of a team works. Some teams also do their community service in the fall. Seniors need help raking leaves, food pantries need non-perishables for Thanksgiving. Toys are needed for Christmas. All of those are great group projects."

Not sure where to begin or need some fresh ideas, here are some links with information and ideas that you might find useful...

- **Community Service** – (Forum discussion with some suggestions and ideals.)
<http://www.chiefdelphi.com/forums/showthread.php?t=90115&highlight=community+service>
- **Community Service** – (Another forum discussion with some suggestions and ideals.)
<http://www.chiefdelphi.com/forums/showthread.php?t=93983&highlight=community+service>
- **Fundraising 101** - (Forum collection of ideas and experiences on the topic of fundraising.)
<http://www.chiefdelphi.com/forums/showthread.php?t=68044&highlight=fundraising+101>
- **Teambuilding (NEMO)** – <http://www.firstnemo.org/teambuilding.htm>
- **"Build a tower, build a team"** (NEMO recommended) http://www.ted.com/talks/tom_wujec_build_a_tower.html
- **Demonstrations - Robotics Driver's Licenses for Kids** – (NEMO recommended)
<http://www.chiefdelphi.com/media/papers/2402>

Non-Engineering Mentor Organization

We deal with all the stuff that isn't rocket science!

Check out their web site for more resources and many, many great ideas! Better yet – join today!

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

In the Spotlight...

FIRST FRC Team #2949 - PWNAGE, Batavia - Featured on TMA TV!

Watch the video - <http://www.youtube.com/user/TMAWEB>



Meet the teenagers who participated in the FIRST Robotics program and were mentored by TMA Member, Genesis Automation. This program started to inspire young people to be science and technology leaders, by engaging them in exciting mentor-based programs that build science, engineering and technology skills.

Katie Goodrich, Team #71 - Team Hammond - Got Published!



Katie is in her junior year at Hammond's Gavit High School. She was selected from several hundred local high school and college students to become a member of *The Times* newspaper's Young Voices Panel, submitting columns that offer fresh perspectives on current events and issues..

This is Katie's third year on Team Hammond where she primarily works on the Chairman's Award submission and presentation to the judges. She is described by a team mentor as being a "really great, fun loving, full of HIGH energy girl. She will do anything that is asked, no complaints, no rolling of the eyes. She also takes new students on the team and makes sure that they fit in somewhere."

A High Five to you Katie and a hearty Congratulations!

Read Katie's Article:

YOUNG VOICES: Take Longer than Seven Seconds to Judge Someone - Posted Monday, October 10, 2011

http://www.nwtimes.com/news/opinion/guest-commentary/article_ed9a61eb-b453-570d-941d-70456209f149.html

Awesome Off-Season Competition!

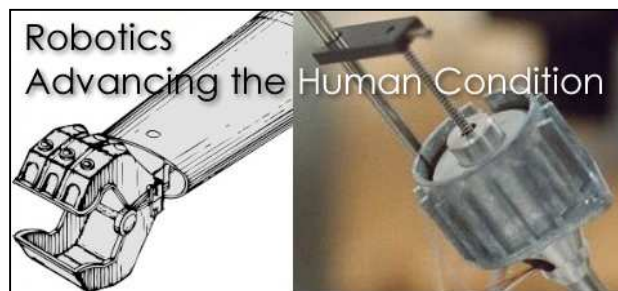
Faced with the question of what they could do to help their former principal Eric McLaren in his battle with ALS, *FIRST* FRC Team #2022, Titan Robotics, discovered that the disease causes Dr. McLaren to use a large amount of calories, consequently he must keep eating almost constantly. However with declining use of his upper body, Dr. McLaren is finding that keeping himself properly fed is becoming a challenge and he may soon need to rely on others to feed him.

The Cause - When the Titan Robotics team learned about this, they decided that should build a practical, affordable machine that an ALS patient (or anyone with very limited use of their upper body i.e. arms and hands) could use in order to eat independently. The students then decided to employ the *FIRST* principles of gracious professionalism and cooperation by creating a collaborative contest for designing a solution. The results of the contest will be made publicly available so that anyone with the need for the machine will have free access to all the plans.

The Game - The premise of the game is simple, but very practical. **The mission is to design and build a robotic device that people with impaired upper body movement can use to feed themselves.** Specifically for this game, the robotic assisting device must be able to pick up a coffee cup or handle-less cup and permit the user to drink from it, and the device must also be able to use a spoon in order to feed yogurt to the user.

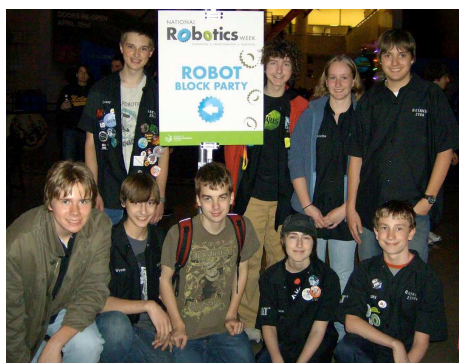
The contest stresses the need for collaboration by hosting a cooperative blog where students from around the world can share their ideas. Also stressed is that as much as possible, the solution should consist of widely available, and inexpensive components so that the device is easily reproducible and costs less than \$1500.

The competition will take place on December 3rd at Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy (IMSA) in Aurora, Illinois, and all *FIRST* teams are invited and encouraged to participate and collaborate in this unique competition. More information, contest rules and sign-up can be found on the cooperative blog: <http://coolhub.imsa.edu/web/robotics-advancing-the-human-condition>, or contact Jim Gerry (jgerry@imsa.edu) if you have any questions or need additional information.

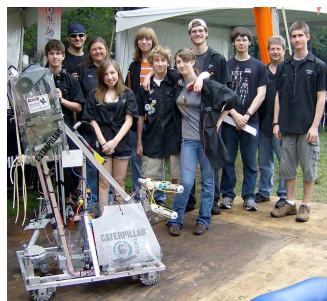


Community Outreach Events

Robot Block Party - Museum of Science & Industry - April 2011



Taste of Chicago - August 2011



Don't forget to send your team's news, photos, community service / events recaps, videos, brilliant ideas, and whatever else you might like to share with your Illinois (and Northwest Indiana) *FIRST* community to ilfrc4u@gmail.com.