

February 2015

Please read the Illinois *FIRST* Executive Director Blog at this [link](#).

ILLINOIS *FIRST* SOCIAL MEDIA

If you are on Facebook, follow Illinois *FIRST*, FLL Illinois/INSciTE Illinois, and Diane Cabiness. New is a Facebook group for FTC teams and team members which may be found [here](#). If you are on Twitter, follow @IllinoisFIRST, @DanGreen_FIRST, @FTCIllinois, @FLLIllinois, and @DCabiness.

Many fellow Illinois *FIRST* FTC and FRC teams have Facebook and Twitter accounts also. It's a nice way to connect and see what other Illinois teams are doing.

IL *FIRST* OUTREACH

All programs in *FIRST* throughout Illinois have the opportunity to partner with the Ronald McDonald House Charities. Simply have your team collect aluminum tabs (soda, juice, adult beverage, or energy drink) from home, family, friends, and school. Collected tabs may be turned in at expos, qualifiers, tournaments and regionals. We will convert the soda tabs into cash and present a check to the Ronald McDonald House Charities.



There are several events coming up for Jr.FLL in Illinois:

- 2/14 – Batavia Open House, Fermilab
- 3/14 – Naperville Exhibit, Naperville
- 3/21 – SW Expo @ SW'ern IL College, Belleville
- 4/11 – Celebration at Raupp Museum, Buffalo Grove
- 4/12 – Central IL Expo – Lincoln Land Comm. College, Springfield

Registration details may be found [here](#). We now have 103 Jr.FLL teams registered in Illinois. Specific questions may be directed to our Illinois Jr.FLL program partner, Mary Buchanan, at jrFLL-contact@ILfirst.org.



Congratulations to all of the award winning teams from the Northern and Central championship tournaments in Illinois. The 1st Place Champion's Award winners, RoboPop and The HIPPIES are invited to attend World Festival in April 2015. Check out the award winning teams on our website at <http://www.ilfirst.org/fl/team-info/fl-winners.html> and <http://www.ilfirst.org/fl/team-info/winnersnct.html>.

Specific questions may be directed to our Illinois FLL program partner, Diane Michalczuk, at contactfllillinois@gmail.com



FIRST® Tech Challenge



This year was an exciting year for FTC robotic teams in Illinois. FTC Illinois held 9 nine tournament's and started an East and West league in northern Illinois. In our nine tournaments we had 220 slots available for teams. The statewide average rate of advancement was 16%. This year we are experimenting with a Friday night check-in at the state tournament. We are hoping to expand the state tournament but we can only do this if we can move to Friday night check-in's. If you are coming to the state tournament we highly encourage you to check in Friday night. This will be a hardware and software inspection with field testing-so you will not need to bring a full team. Saturday morning check-in will begin at 7:30 AM with judging probably beginning at 8 AM. We still need volunteers for the state tournament. If you or your team is able to volunteer at the state tournament, please sign up on [VIMS](#).

FRC team #7301 set up a new Facebook page for fellow FTC teams/students to join to share questions, best practices, etc. It may be found [here](#).

Specific questions may be directed to either of our Illinois FTC program partners: Sue Kunzeman at FTC-contact@ILfirst.org or Jonathan Weiland at jwFTCil@gmail.com.



FIRST® Robotics Competition



Al Skierkiewicz, robot inspector extraordinaire, has an important blog on the IL *FIRST* website regarding clarification of R58 and the MXP port. Please read it [here](#).

Teams needing hotel reservations for either Illinois regional, please go to this [link](#).

Notable dates this month for FRC include:

- 2/12 - Entrepreneurship award deadline
Woodie Flowers award deadline
 - 2/14 – Scrimmage events (more details below)
 - 2/17 - Stop build day
 - 2/19 - TIMS judge information deadline
Chairman's award deadline
Dean's list award deadline
 - 2/28 – Media & Technology Innovation Award
- A full calendar for FRC events may be found [here](#).

CIR UPDATE - The Central Illinois Regional (CIR) will be held March 18-21, 2015 at the Bradley University Renaissance Coliseum. We have 37 teams signed up from 12 states and one from Istanbul, Turkey! Also, we have 3 rookie teams attending this event. We have been partnering with Bradley University's Caterpillar College of Engineering to organize this event and have been working hard to make the CIR enjoyable for all who attend. We have lots of eager volunteers already lined up to help, but we still need a few more in select areas. If you are interested, please sign up in [VIMS](#). We are looking forward to seeing many of you at CIR and seeing how Recycle Rush will play in Peoria.

MWR UPDATE - The Midwest Regional Planning Committee has been hard at work getting ready for the 2015 FRC Competition at the UIC Pavilion in Chicago, April 1-4, 2015. Our multi-national Midwest Regional will feature 54 teams with teams from Israel and Turkey. Teams, team leaders and mentors are working diligently to participate and compete at MWR. Please encourage your friends, relatives, parents and classmates to sign-up as volunteers in our [VIMS](#) system to help us all enjoy, and have a great regional. The entire planning committee looks forward to seeing you in April. Good luck, continue to build, and have fun!

SCRIMMAGE/PRACTICE

The Caterpillar plant in Peoria built a half field for area teams to practice on. Thanks for that tip, team #1736, Robot Casserole. Team #4241, Joliet Cyborgs, invites teams to practice at their facility during the week or on Saturdays... contact them at ccolins@jths.org.

On Saturday, February 14, Chicago Knights will be hosting their annual scrimmage near Midway Airport in Chicago. Details will soon be posted on their Facebook page (Chicago Knights Robotics FIRST Team #1739).

Also team #2338, Gear It Forward, is hosting their 2nd annual Robotics Extravaganza on February 14. A flyer is posted on their Facebook page (Gear It Forward Robotics: Oswego 2338). For more information or to RSVP, please contact the team at first2338@yahoo.com.

SENIOR MENTOR BLOG

The Senior Mentor Corner is a potpourri of events and activities that may be of interest to teams or students of our Illinois *FIRST* teams. Some information will be directly from *FIRST*HQ. Other events/activities may not necessarily be sanctioned functions of *FIRST* or *FIRST* ILLINOIS but may be of general interest to our teams regarding fun events, fundraising, etc.

FLL GLOBAL INNOVATION AWARD

The FLL Global Innovation Award is a competition designed to showcase the real-world, innovative solutions that *FIRST* LEGO League teams create as a result of their Project. Any registered FLL team can enter. It's completely voluntary, and not part of the *FIRST* LEGO League season. Deadline is February 10 at 1:00 CST. Semifinalists will present at World Festival. Finalists will be honored at a ceremony in Washington, DC. Prizes include \$5,000 - \$20,000 cash for your team and a LEGO MINDSTORMS EV3 for each team member of the 3 finalist teams. More information may be found [here](#).

FIRST SCHOLARSHIPS

Colleges, universities, professional associations, and corporations offer college scholarships to participants on *FIRST* FTC and FRC teams. Millions of dollars are available to our students. Scholarship information may be found [here](#).

LEGOLAND Schaumburg

LEGOLAND Discovery Center is Schaumburg is looking for LEGO fans ages 4 to 12 to work with their Creative Crew. Contest details may be found [here](#) and must be submitted by February 8.

CONTEST FOR JR. HIGH STUDENTS

The US Consumer Product Safety Commission is sponsoring a nationwide safety poster contest to raise awareness about the dangers of carbon monoxide. Prizes range from \$500 - \$1,000. Entries must be submitted by February 27. More info may be found [here](#).

SPARE PARTS MOVIE

Have you seen the movie Spare Parts yet? It is inspired by *FIRST* FRC team #842 and their robotic underdog victory against MIT. The movie stars Jamie Lee Curtis, George Lopez, Carlos PenaVega and Marisa Tomei.

Diane Cabiness, FIRST Senior Mentor – Illinois

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