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ROBOTS invade Camdenon High School

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Robots and their inventors invaded Camdenton for the annual Mid MO FIRST LEGO League Qualifying tournament hosted at Camdenton High School Nov. 12 by the FIRST LASER 3284 HS Robotics Team. Thirty-five mid- and southern Missouri teams traveled to the Lake to compete in three separate challenges which included the Robot Game, the Project and Core Values.

Teams of up to ten youth in grades 4-8 participated in the challenge by programming an autonomous robot to score points on a themed playing field (Robot Game), developing a solution to a real world problem they have identified (Project), all guided by the FIRST LEGO League Core Values. Teams each attend one official qualifier hosted by FIRST affiliates partners hoping to advance to state level competition and then on to the World Championship.

This year's challenge was called Animal Allies. FIRST asked more than 28,000 teams worldwide to think like scientists and engineers during this year's challenge. During the Animal Allies season, teams had to choose and solve a real-world problem centered on animals and how humans interact with them. They were asked to identify a problem with the way people interact with animals. Suggested topics were: Animals accidentally harmed by an activity that helps people, recreating a natural living environment inside human-made buildings, feeding, finding the right enrichment activities for a specific animal, healing injured or sick animals, managing feces, natural animal instincts accidentally harming people, conserving endangered species and transportation.

After teams identified their problem they then researched current solutions and why those solutions are not working. They then set out to become innovative scientists to find better solutions to enhance current practices. Teams then shared their solutions with others and prepared a presentation for a judging panel.

Robots must be programmed to run autonomously to complete missions using numerous sensors (touch, color, ultrasonic, light, etc.) on a competition table with LEGO models symbolizing animals in various settings. Examples included transporting animals from one location to another, moving a gecko on a biomimicry wall to mimic the "stickiness" of gecko feet, releasing a panda after it is studied back into its natural habitat, recovering a tracking camera after it has been placed on an animal to study its habitat, helping a pet with a prosthesis find its proper environment, and numerous others mission that all have point values. The robots are judged on strategy, the design process, the mechanical design and programming.

Students are given an on-the-spot challenge that is not easily completed and observed by judges to see if students exhibit the Core Values of FIRST. The values include being a gracious professional, working as a team and having fun!

The Mid MO FLL qualifier is a community event that is hosted by the LASER 3284 HS robotics team with the help of 120-plus community volunteers. The tournament volunteers all must pass a background check, referees must be certified through FIRST and judges are trained by a head judge advisor.

Awards:

Mechanical Design Award – 14913 Green County 4-H Thunder Bombs

Programming Award -4751 Gilligan 007 Fishing Company St Louis

Strategy & Innovation 24133 Epic Fury Lebanon

Inspiration 571 LASER Bear Bombers Camdenton



Teamwork Award 21550 The Gearheads Eldon

Gracious Professionalism – 27773 Talk Nerdy to Me Eldon

Research Award -8480 When Pigs Fly! Eldon

Innovation Solution – 19453 Laquey Buzz Bots

Presentation Award 19492 Laquey Buzz Bots

Rising Star Award -16498 St. Martin Short Circuits Jefferson City

Robot Performance Award - 7149 R- Cubed Rolla

Core Values Award – 1289 Big Bot Theory Nixa

Advancing on to the state tournament in St. Louis on Dec. 4 are the following teams:

24195 The T-Town Lions Tuscumbia

16498 Short Circuits –Jefferson City

7149 R-Cubed Rolla

1289 Big Bot Theory Nixa

8481 The Robo-Bees Eldon



In addition, Eldon's 8480 When Pigs Fly will have their innovative solution presented to a panel of judges to be considered for the Global Innovation Award at State. The Global Innovation Award presented by XPRIZE is a competition designed to showcase the real-world, innovative solutions that FIRST LEGO League teams create as a result of their Project. The judges will review their submission to be considered for this prestigious honor presented by XPRIZE!

The Camdenton HS LASER 3284 team will host a FIRST Tech Challenge Qualifying Tournament for grades 7-12 on Dec. 17 at Camdenton High School. If you are interested in volunteering or becoming a tournament sponsor please contact the Camdenton R-III Afterschool Services office at 573-346-9233.