The Automation Federation and the International Society of Automation continue to build on their partnership with FIRST

The International Society of Automation

Automation Federation News Release
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The Automation Federation and the International Society of Automation continue to build on their partnership with FIRST® to enhance teaching of and interest in science and technology in K-12 education

Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, USA (08 October 2012) – The Automation Federation (AF) and its founding sponsor, the International Society of Automation (ISA), continue to build on their partnership with FIRST® to strengthen math and science teaching in K-12 education, and inspire and support a new generation of technology innovators.

Earlier this year, Marcus Rasco, a senior professor in electronics at DeVry University in Irving, Texas, and the president of ISA's North Texas Section, served as a judge at the Dallas East Regional **FIRST Robotics Competition**, at the Dallas Convention Center.

Two years ago, the AF and ISA entered into a formal partnership with FIRST (**For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) to promote** the importance of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), and motivate young students toward careers in automation and engineering. As part of this alliance, AF and ISA members around the world are highly encouraged to participate in FIRST initiatives in their local communities.

"Participating as a judge in this competition enabled me to gain a first-row seat to the inventiveness, creativity and scientific aptitude of many of our young people," Rasco said. "It was a great experience and it drove home the importance of continuing to help and encourage young people develop their technological skills and capabilities."

For years, Rasco has been actively involved with school districts in northern Texas

to place a greater emphasis science and technology instruction. He has helped conduct numerous robotics, electronics and biomedical-related workshops at middle schools, high schools and on the DeVry University campus.

One of the challenges that these students face is the high start-up costs for a robotic kit. Upon Rasco's recommendation, ISA's North Texas Section approved a donation to one local school, the Jack E. Singley Academy, to help defray the costs of a robotic kit. In addition, he contacted representatives at five other professional engineering societies in Texas, urging them to become involved through either donations or mentoring initiatives.

"Marcus Rasco's initiative is emblematic of the type of grassroots involvement and mentorship that we envisioned when the AF and ISA decided to partner with FIRST," says Mike Marlowe, AF director. "Our organizations have a common goal to increase the awareness of automation and engineering education around the world. As industry professionals, we're in the ideal positions to enrich the lives of young people and open their eyes to exciting career pathways in automation."

Dean Kamen, **FIRST®** founder and chief executive officer at DEKA Research and Development, emphasizes that "bringing students together with engaged, accomplished engineering and automation professionals helps stimulate interest in STEM course work, which is essential for America to remain competitive in the fields of automation and technology."

FIRST is a not-for-profit organization formed in 1989 to attract young people to career opportunities in STEM. Each year FIRST offers young people from ages six to 18 the opportunity to participate in an international robotics competition and celebration where teams win recognition, gain self-confidence, develop people and life skills, make new friends, and perhaps discover an unforeseen career path.

As the "Voice of Automation," AF seeks to serve as a catalyst for cultivating the next wave of automation professionals. The AF and ISA have developed initial work plans with FIRST to recruit new volunteers, mentors, and sponsors, establish new teams, and promote the work of FIRST through ongoing workforce development initiatives.

All across the U.S., business, engineering and educational leaders are forming partnerships to improve the quantity and quality of engineers and engineering technologists graduating from America's educational system.

Many experts say that the lack of emphasis on science and math learning in our public schools is causing the U.S. to lose its edge in innovation and eroding its capacity to create new scientific and technological breakthroughs. If this trend continues, they say, America's long-term economic growth, standard of living and national security could be undermined.

About *FIRST*®

Accomplished inventor Dean Kamen [2] founded *FIRST* [3]®(For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) in 1989 to inspire an appreciation of science and technology in young people.

Based in Manchester, N.H., *FIRST* designs accessible, innovative programs to build self-confidence, knowledge, and life skills while motivating young people to pursue opportunities in science, technology and engineering. With support from three out of every five Fortune 500 companies and nearly $15 million in college scholarships, the not-for-profit organization hosts the *FIRST*® Robotics Competition [4] (FRC®) for students in Grades 9-12; *FIRST*® Tech Challenge [5] (FTC®) for Grades 7-12; *FIRST*® LEGO® League [6] (FLL®) for Grades 4-8; and Junior *FIRST*® LEGO® League [7] (Jr.FLL®) for Grades K-3. Gracious Professionalism [8]® is a way of doing things that encourages high-quality work, emphasizes the value of others, and respects individuals and the community.

To learn more about *FIRST*, go to www.usfirst.org [3].

About the Automation Federation

The Automation Federation is a global umbrella organization under which member associations and societies engaged in manufacturing and process automation activities can work more effectively to fulfill their missions, advance the science and engineering of automation technologies and applications and develop the workforce needed to capitalize on the benefits of automation. The Automation Federation is working to become the “Voice of Automation.” For more information about the Automation Federation, visit www.automationfederation.org [9].

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