

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Tuesday, May 9, 2017

### **Iowa well-represented at international *FIRST*<sup>®</sup> Championship**

*Eighteen Iowa teams qualified, seven won awards against teams from around the world*

**CEDAR FALLS, Iowa** – Among 52,000 teams participating in *FIRST* (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) across the world from 86 countries, 18 Iowa teams of 200 students navigated the qualifying pathway to reach the *FIRST* Championship held in St. Louis in late April.

More than 700 teams from 33 countries participated in the event, including three Iowa teams in *FIRST* Lego League Jr. (grades K-4), two in *FIRST* Lego League (grades 4-8), seven in *FIRST* Tech Challenge (grades 7-12) and six teams in *FIRST* Robotics Competition (grades 9-12). Seven of those teams received honors:

- Davenport's *FIRST* Tech Challenge team, "Combustible Lemons" (Team 5466), received the Inspiration Award, which is the most prestigious award that recognizes the team most exemplifying the essence of the program and is an inspiration to other teams. The team from Davenport West High School is coached by Project Lead The Way instructors Jason Franzenburg and Greg Smith.
- Davenport's *FIRST* Robotics team, "Disruptive Innovation" (Team 6317), received the Rookie All-Star Award.
- Muscatine's *FIRST* Robotics team, "Fire Island Robotics" (Team 6420), received the Rookie All-Star Award.
- West Des Moines' *FIRST* Robotics team, "ICE" (Team 6419), received the Rookie Inspiration Award.
- Denver's *FIRST* Lego League Jr. team, "Cybits" (Team 8126), received the Inquiring Minds Award.
- Bettendorf's *FIRST* Lego League Jr. team, "Team Crusher BOTS" (Team 7586), received the Outstanding Teamwork Award.
- Camanche's *FIRST* Lego League Jr. team, "Bee Builders" (Team 378), received The Amazing Movement Award.

The *FIRST* organization says that participants are two times as likely to major in a STEM field of study compared to their peers who do not take part in the programs.

The Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council has boosted *FIRST* participation in Iowa by partnering with the organization through the [STEM Scale-Up Program](#) since 2012. *FIRST* Lego League was scaled across Iowa in 2012-13; *FIRST* Tech Challenge was scaled in 2012-13, 2014-15 and again in 2015-16; and *FIRST* Robotics Competition was scaled in 2016-17 and again for the coming academic year.

STEM Council member and Chairman, President and CEO of Rockwell Collins Kelly Ortberg serves as co-chair of the Board for *FIRST*. John Deere and Rockwell Collins are Strategic Partners of *FIRST* as well.

For more information regarding the *FIRST* organization, visit [www.firstinspires.org](http://www.firstinspires.org), and more about *FIRST* in Iowa, can be found at [www.iafirst.org](http://www.iafirst.org). Details on Iowa's STEM Scale-Up Program are online at [www.IowaSTEM.gov/Scale-Up](http://www.IowaSTEM.gov/Scale-Up).

Additional *FIRST* teams in Iowa that qualified for the international championship include:

#### *FIRST* Lego League

- 11830, Jasper County 4H Gearbots, Newton
- 24559, Red Dangerous, Cedar Rapids

#### *FIRST* Tech Challenge

- 4177, Finger Tightans, Highland High School, Riverside
- 5153, Tachyons, Benton Community High School, Van Horne
- 5975, Cybots, Denver High School, Denver
- 7236, Recharged Green, Homeschool Group, Pella
- 7261, Omega Robotics, North High School, Sioux City
- 9955, Synthesis, Belmond Area Arts Club, Garner

#### *FIRST* Robotics Competition

- 648, QC ELITE - Flaming Squirrels, Quad Cities
- 3928, Team Neutrino, Ames
- 6630, F.U.N. (FieRCely Uknighated Nation), LaPorte City

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#### **About the Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council**

Established in July 2011 via Governor's Executive Order, the Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council is a public-private partnership of educators, companies and Iowa students and families addressing policies and programs designed to improve Iowa's educational system focused on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The STEM Council works to engage and prepare students for a career-ready workforce path, regain our State's historic leadership position in education, and provide a vital competitive economic advantage now, and for the future, to ensure that every Iowa student has access to world-class STEM education opportunities. The 47-member STEM Council is chaired by Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds and Kemin Industries President and CEO Dr. Chris Nelson. For more information, visit [www.iowaSTEM.gov](http://www.iowaSTEM.gov).