

From: robotics@hawaii.gov
Subject: NEWS RELEASE: FOUR HAWAI'I ROBOTICS TEAMS TO COMPETE IN FIRST WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ? ?
SUPER BOWL OF SMARTS?
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FOUR HAWAI'I ROBOTICS TEAMS TO COMPETE IN FIRST WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP – “SUPER BOWL OF SMARTS”

HONOLULU – Four Hawai'i high school robotics teams – Maui, McKinley, Moanalua and Waialua High Schools – are headed to Atlanta, Georgia to compete in the *FIRST* Robotics World Championship, April 16-18, in the Georgia Dome. (See below for today's airport departure details.)

The four teams advanced to the World Championship after qualifying during the 2009 NASA/BAE Systems *FIRST in Hawai'i* Regional Robotics Competition held last month at the Stan Sheriff Center on the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa campus.

In the regional competition, the three-team alliance of McKinley, Maui and Moanalua High Schools beat out 31 other teams to capture the top spot. Meanwhile, Waialua High and Intermediate School earned its way to the Championship by winning the Regional Chairman's Award.

Maui High (Maui High *FIRST* Team) is Maui's first team that has qualified for the *FIRST* World Championship. For Moanalua High School (Cool Geeks) it will be the team's first time competing in the international arena. This will be McKinley's (Team Kika Mana) fourth time competing in the World Championship, and the sixth appearance for Waialua High and Intermediate School (Hawaiian Kids). Last year, the Waialua team was presented with the second-highest award of the competition – the *FIRST* Engineering Inspiration Award, which celebrates outstanding success in advancing respect and appreciation for engineering within a team's school and community.

The four Hawai'i teams will face close to 350 other teams from Brazil, Canada, Israel, Mexico, the Philippines and the U.S. mainland in a competition, often called the “Super Bowl of Smarts,” that tests students' ingenuity, critical thinking skills and knowledge of science, technology, engineering and math – or STEM.

“All of Hawai'i can be very proud of the outstanding accomplishments of these four robotics teams,” said Governor Lingle. “These students are using their academic knowledge and developing innovative skills that will help them succeed in their future education and in the workforce. As the people of Hawai'i cheer on our robotics teams from Maui, McKinley, Moanalua and Waialua, I hope they take note that the lessons the students are learning in building, operating and repairing their robots in friendly competition are preparing them to find solutions to the complex challenges that are facing our state and our nation.”

Lt. Governor James R. “Duke” Aiona, Jr. will meet with the robotics teams from McKinley and Moanalua today at the airport.

“These young people are technological pioneers who deserve our utmost respect and support,” said Lt. Governor Aiona. “They are competing with the best robotics teams in the world, and they are doing so with the backing of our entire state.”

The *FIRST* (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Competition helps students discover the rewards and excitement of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The students were given a common engineering problem to solve using a standard kit of parts and a common set of rules – but no instructions. Working with mentors, they had six weeks to build a robot, using their minds, their innovation and a lot of teamwork.

This year's challenge, “Lunacy,” celebrates the 40th anniversary of Apollo 11's historic mission to the moon. It features red and blue alliances, consisting of three teams that compete to outscore each other in a two-minute and 15-second match. To simulate driving in the one-sixth gravity

on the surface of the moon, the students maneuvered their robots on a game field "crater" that was covered with a slick, polymer material. Each remote-controlled robot carried a trailer and, in order to score, threw "orbit balls," designated as Moon Rocks, Empty Cells or Super Cells, into the opposing team's trailer.

Robotics is a critical component of the Lingle-Aiona Administration's Hawai'i Innovation Initiative because it engages students in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education. The competition also fosters students' teamwork, communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills that will better prepare them to enter the work force, regardless of what career they choose.

WATCH THE ACTION LIVE:

Live NASA webcast: www.robotics.nasa.gov/events/2009_frcchampionship.php

NASA Digital TV: www.nasa.gov/multimedia/nasatv/index.html

Governor's Website: www.hawaii.gov/qov

For more information, including results throughout the competition: www.usfirst.org

For more information on the *FIRST in Hawai'i* Robotics Competition, as well as other student robotics programs in Hawai'i, visit www.robotics.hawaii.gov as well as the Governor's web site at www.hawaii.gov/qov.

AIRPORT SEND-OFF

The teams from McKinley and Moanalua will depart today, April 14 at 3:15 p.m.

Media wishing to cover the send-off should meet at 2:15 p.m., Honolulu International Airport, 2nd floor, main terminal (under the clock tower), in front of the DOT Office. Please RSVP to russell.pang@hawaii.gov or 586-0043.

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