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Student Teams Build Robots, Compete Against One Another at FIRST LEGO League Tournament

- Nexteer Automotive mentors five teams, sponsors 15 Mid-Michigan teams and co-sponsors the competition on Saturday

SAGINAW, Mich. – On Saturday, Nov. 21, 280 local children making up 28 teams will compete against one another in a Nexteer-sponsored robotics tournament at Delta College in Saginaw from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The qualifying tournament is part of the 2009 FIRST LEGO League “Ready, Set, LEGO” Smart Move Challenge where kids use research and robotics to solve issues relating to transportation safety or efficiency. In Saturday’s competition, kids ages 9 to 14 put their eight weeks of research, design and programming to the test.

Nexteer Automotive, the only tier one automotive supplier committed exclusively to wheel-to-wheel advanced steering and driveline systems, is co-sponsoring the competition with Delta College. Nexteer sponsored 15 Mid-Michigan schools participating. In addition, five of its engineers have mentored teams throughout the robot design process during the last two months. At the event, there will be 40 Nexteer employees providing volunteer onsite facilitation and support.

“We believe it’s critical to sparks kids’ interest in science and technology and encourage creative thinking and teamwork,” said David Barnas, executive director of global external affairs at Nexteer Automotive. “These students are mentored by innovative and passionate engineers who teach them not only how to solve problems through robotics and sensor technology, but that they can have fun while doing it.”

Nexteer-sponsored teams from the following schools will compete on Saturday:

- Arrowwood Elementary
- Saginaw Arts & Sciences Academy
- Loomis Elementary
- Handley Elementary*
- Thompson Middle
- Kempton Elementary
- White Pine Middle
- Hemmeter Elementary
- Christ the King Elementary*
- Woodcrest Elementary*
- St. Peter Lutheran School*
- Woodland Park Academy
- Freeland Elementary*
- Marshall Greene Middle
- Christa McAuliffe Middle

(* indicated teams also mentored by Nexteer engineers.)

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The tournament is free and open to the public. Top teams will progress to a championship tournament in Flint, Mich., on Dec. 12.

About *FIRST* LEGO League

FIRST LEGO League is an international program created in a partnership between *FIRST* (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) and The LEGO® Group in 1998 based on a common belief that fun and learning go hand-in-hand, and that an inspired mind can accomplish anything. Using LEGO MINDSTORMS® technologies and LEGO play materials, children work alongside adult mentors to design, build and program robots to complete missions based on real-world challenges. After eight weeks, the competition season culminates at high-energy, sports-like tournaments.

The competition is judged in four areas: project presentation; robot performance; technical design and programming of the robot; and teamwork. The highest honor will go to the team that best exemplifies the spirit and values of the program. Select teams will also have the opportunity to participate at the *FIRST* LEGO League World Festival, to be held in conjunction with the *FIRST* Championship, April 15-17, 2010 at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta, Georgia. www.FIRSTLEGOLeague.org.

About Nexteer Automotive

Nexteer Automotive is a multi-billion dollar global steering and driveline business solely dedicated to electric and hydraulic steering systems, steering columns and driveline products for original equipment manufacturers. Its 6,200 employees serve more than 60 customers in every major region of the world with 15 manufacturing sites, six engineering and 14 customer service centers strategically located in North and South America, Europe and Asia. Nexteer Automotive's customers include GM, Fiat, Ford, Toyota, Chrysler, and PSA Peugeot Citroen, as well as automakers in India, China and South America. www.nexteer.com.

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