



Autodesk and FIRST Provide Competitive Robotics to the Masses With the FIRST Vex Challenge

April 3, 2007

Autodesk and FIRST Team Up to Offer Real-World Engineering Experiences, Encouraging the Pursuit of Science and Math to More Students

SAN RAFAEL, Calif., April 3, 2007 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX News Network/ -- Autodesk, Inc. (Nasdaq: ADSK) is partnering with FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) to provide real-world experience and support to an expanded pool of next generation engineers with the FIRST Vex Challenge (FVC), a robotics competition for high-school-aged students. The complementary program brings the spirit and values of the FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) to a greater number of students and schools of varying resources, opening the doors of opportunity to explore careers in science, math and technology. More than 5,000 high-school-aged students on 500 teams have competed in more than 25 FVC tournaments from November, 2006 through March, 2007. One hundred teams will participate in the FIRST Championship April 12-14, 2007, in the Georgia Dome in Atlanta.

(Logo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20050415/SFF034LOGO>)

The FVC program offers students the ability to get involved in a robotics challenge where the teams test their skills by building robots with a kit of pieces called the Vex Robotics Design System. The FVC pieces do not require welding or machining, allowing more options in robot design and construction. As a result, FVC is more accessible and opens FIRST challenges to a much broader scope of student competitors.

"The ultimate goal of the FIRST Vex Challenge is to reach more young people so they can discover the excitement and rewards of science, technology and engineering. And now we have the opportunity to impact even more students," said Dean Kamen, inventor, entrepreneur and founder of FIRST. "Working alongside engineers and other professionals, students experience the real-world application of science and math concepts. The hands-on problem solving utilized in the FIRST challenges develops valuable skills students will need in progressing toward higher education and eventually professional careers."

Each FVC team is comprised of professional mentors and a maximum of 10 high-school-aged students. The program has a flexible structure that allows teams to form within the school or home-school environment, as an after-school program, with a neighborhood group or as part of any youth-based organization.

Autodesk will provide various FVC teams with its Autodesk Inventor software for use in designing, building and visualizing their projects. In addition to designing and building their robots, the teams will be required to keep a journal that tracks their progress -- making the process of engineering as important as the end product.

"The FIRST Vex Challenge is a great opportunity for FIRST to expand its programs, allowing a much greater number of students to push the boundaries of creative engineering," said Paul Mailhot, senior director of Autodesk Worldwide Education Programs. "Autodesk is excited to help enable the program by giving students access to real-world technology throughout the process and allowing them to experience the thrill of seeing their ideas come to life."

Autodesk is sponsoring FVC in addition to its overall \$17 million software and training contributions to the 2007 FRC. Each year, FRC students use a common kit of parts to compete in a unique game. This year's game, dubbed "Rack 'N' Roll," calls for the 1,300 participating student teams to design robots to hang inflated colored tubes on pegs configured in rows and columns on a 10-foot high center "rack" structure. This year, more than 32,000 FRC high school students are exploring innovation in engineering and 3D design visualization with support from Autodesk. Student participants will gain firsthand experience with Autodesk Inventor 3D mechanical design software, and award-winning Autodesk 3ds Max 3D modeling, animation and rendering software.

About FIRST

Accomplished inventor Dean Kamen founded FIRST (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 the support of many of the world's most well-known companies, the not-for-profit organization hosts the FIRST Robotics Competition and FIRST Vex Challenge for high-school students, the FIRST LEGO League for children 9-14 years old, and the Junior FIRST LEGO League for 6- to 9-year-olds. To learn more about FIRST, go to <http://www.usfirst.org>.

About Autodesk Education

Autodesk, the world leader in 2D and 3D design software, supports academic achievement and lifelong learning by providing educators and students the solutions they need to prepare for design careers in the manufacturing, construction, and media and entertainment markets. Autodesk enables the next generation of engineers, designers and architects to experience their ideas before they are real by placing state-of-the-art digital prototyping solutions in classrooms throughout the world. Autodesk helps institutions invest in the future by offering substantial discounts, innovative subscription offerings, grant programs, training, curricula and community resources. For more information about Autodesk's education programs and solutions, visit <http://www.autodesk.com/education>.

About Autodesk

Autodesk, Inc. is the world leader in 2D and 3D design software for the manufacturing, construction, and media and entertainment markets. Since its introduction of AutoCAD software in 1982, Autodesk has developed the broadest portfolio of state-of-the-art digital prototyping solutions to help customers experience their ideas before they are real. Fortune 1000 companies rely on Autodesk for the tools to visualize, simulate and analyze real-world performance early in the design process to save time and money, enhance quality and foster innovation. For additional information about Autodesk, visit <http://www.autodesk.com>.

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