

Local Teams Advance in World Robotics Championship

Teams from Prince William Co., Herndon, and Greenbelt will compete in St. Louis

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Teams from all over the East Coast, Brazil, and Israel made their way to Washington D.C. this weekend for the FIRST robotics competition. News4's Seth Lemon spent some time with the local teams.

passage to St. Louis and the FIRST World Robotics Championship after this weekend's event at the Washington Convention Center.

The FIRST Robotics Competition DC Regional drew 58 teams from the Mid-Atlantic region, as well as from Israel and Brazil. Their task: design and build remote-controlled robots that could fling Frisbee-looking discs through targets. In addition to earning points to flinging the discs through the targets, the robots also earned points for climbing specially built pyramids on the competition field.

Founded by Segway inventor Dean Kamen in 1989, FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) is an umbrella program aimed at inspiring young people to pursue opportunities in science, technology, and engineering.

The three local teams to advance to the FIRST Championship in St. Louis in late April were:

- ILITE Robotics, from Battlefield High School in Prince William County, Va. won the Virginia Regional Chairman's Award, which honors "the team that, in the judges' estimation, best represents a model for other teams to emulate, embodying the goals and mission of FIRST."
- Epsilon Delta, from Herndon High School in Herndon, Va. won the Engineering Inspiration Award for "outstanding success in advancing respect and appreciation for engineering and engineers, both within their school as well as their community."
- Team Illusion, a community team from Greenbelt, Md., were honored as Rookie All-Stars.

They will joined in St. Louis by a three-team alliance that achieved the highest scores after qualifying and elimination matches:

- Team Krunch, from East Lake H.S. in Tarpon Springs, FL
- The RoboCats, from Gerard H.S. in Gerard, OH
- The Brazilian Machine, from Provincia de Sao Pedro H.S. in Porto Alegre, Brazil

More than 3,000 students, supporters, and spectators turned out over the two-day event.