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STUDENTS FROM ACROSS OAHU, HAWAII COMPETE IN VEX “BRIDGE BATTLE” ROBOTICS TOURNAMENT TO PREPARE FOR FIRST REGIONAL ROBOTICS COMPETITION

*Bridge Battle Game Gives Students an Affordable and Easy Way to Compete in
Robotics and Learn about Science and Technology*

Honolulu, Hawaii – November 6, 2007 – Up to 200 students will assemble to compete in the first U.S. “Bridge Battle” robotics competition in Hawaii. The event will take place on November 12, 2007 at the Kamehameha School’s Kapalama Campus in Honolulu. Public and private schools from around the island will participate and put their engineering and technology skills to the test.

The Bridge Battle regional competition will bring together teams of high school students who have built the most innovative robots possible from the popular VEX Robotics Design System, developed by Innovation First, Inc., to compete in a challenging game where teams try to obtain the most possible points. Students participating in the Oahu Bridge Battle competition are using this tournament as a way to prepare for the upcoming FIRST Robotics Competition Hawaii Regional in March, 2008.

Bridge Battle was recently introduced at the Asian Robotics League (ARL) Championship in Seoul Korea on October 18-19, 2007 and was created at the request of ARL organizers who wanted to engage students in the fun and excitement of science and technology with a tournament that is affordable to host and easy to implement. It is played on a 12'x12' square field that is divided into two sections with two teams on each

side. Each team controls their robots to place tennis balls in respective colored sections of a bridge platform and works closely together to accomplish this task. Game instructions and rules are available to participants for free on vexrobotics.com and competition entry fee are minimal, or free in the case of this event.

“We wanted to provide students in Hawaii with a fun and challenging robotics competition that is easily accessible and extremely affordable to all schools,” said Art Kimura of the Hawaii Space Grant Consortium who has brought numerous robotics opportunities to the students of Hawaii. “The Bridge Battle game is a highly effective way to engage students of all ages in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) and help them prepare for future academic and professional success.”

While robotics has increased in popularity among today’s students at both the secondary and post-secondary level, with hundreds of different US events and competitions taking place in 2006 alone; only five to ten percent of schools take advantage of these programs. Bridge Battle is designed to give more students the chance to learn about STEM and help foster the next generation of future engineers.

“Without a program like this, it would be hard for me to involve my students in a hands-on learning environment that gives them experience in science and engineering,” said Osa Tui, an event organizer and teacher at McKinley High School in Honolulu. “It’s exciting to see how the students are able to convert a box of parts into a fully functional robot. In the process, they also learn critical skills such as teamwork, collaboration, critical thinking, professionalism and problem-solving.”

For more information about Bridge Battle and the regional competitions, please visit www.vexrobotics.com or www.robotevents.com.

About Bridge Battle

The object of Bridge Battle is to attain a higher score than your opponent alliance by using a robot to place tennis balls and bonus balls into goals. In addition, an alliance

can earn additional points by "parking" robots on either of the two platforms. A bonus is awarded to the alliance that has the most total points at the end of the Autonomous Period.

There are a total of seventy-seven (77) tennis balls available as scoring objects in Bridge Battle. Sixty-one (61) of these tennis balls will be found on the field, while eight (8) will be available to each alliance prior to the match. Three (3) of the sixty-one tennis balls on the field are bonus balls.

Each robot (no larger than 18"x18"x18" to start) begins a match touching one of the colored alliance station tiles for their alliance. There are two rectangular bin shaped goals designated for each alliance, at a height of 14.5" off the ground. These four goals effectively divide the field into two halves, with less than 12" of clearance for robots to pass underneath. Alliances can earn additional points at the conclusion of a match by having one or two of their robots "parked" on either of the 3/4" high, 15" square scoring platforms located on the far side of the field.

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