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## **VEX ROBOTICS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP POWERS UP AT WALT DISNEY WORLD'S ESPN WIDE WORLD OF SPORTS COMPLEX ON APRIL 14-16, 2011**

*Academics Take Center Stage as Thousands of Students Unite to Compete in the World's  
Largest Robotics Movement*

**STERLING HEIGHTS, Mich. – April 12, 2011** – Celebrating National Robotics Week, nearly 10,000 middle school, high school and university participants from 16 countries around the world will compete in the action-packed 2011 VEX Robotics World Championship, to be held with free admission to the general public at the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex at the Walt Disney World® Resort near Orlando, Florida on April 14-16, 2011. Giving the event mainstream recognition similar to that of an international sporting event, the Boy Scouts of America will be in attendance along with Congressman Ralph Hall. Talent from The Discovery Channel's *MYTHBUSTERS* series and host of The Science Channel's hit show *HEAD RUSH*, Kari Byron, will serve as master of ceremonies to guide teams and spectators through the final award ceremony on the last day of competition.

"We are excited to welcome our distinguished guests and premier event partners including Autodesk, NASA and EMC Corporation into Disney's impressive global arena as we join together in celebrating the accomplishments of these powerful young minds," said Jason Morrella, president of the REC Foundation. "The magnitude of attendees at this year's event speaks to the strength of the VEX Robotics Competition as a perfect model for educational robotics and workforce development. There are now over 100,000 students using VEX Robotics worldwide, showing the empowering effect it is having on participating schools, students and the international community."

The VEX Robotics program is in support of The White House's STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) initiative to get kids engaged in higher learning, and recently received attention from President Obama who visited a Miami Central High School classroom where he interacted with students excelling in STEM education through VEX Robotics. To show his support at the World Championship, Congressman Ralph Hall, senior member of the US House of Representatives and chair of the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology – which funds NASA and the National Science Foundation – will cheer teams on, alongside other keynote attendees including Mele Williams, staff director of the Subcommittee on Research and Science Education; executives from Boy Scouts of America; and, of course, Mickey Mouse and friends.

As the fastest growing robotics program in the world, the VEX Robotics Competition is organized by the REC Foundation, and the 2011 VEX Robotics World Championship serves as the final event of the 2010-2011 competition season. This year, almost 600 out of the nearly 4,000 VEX Robotics Competition teams have earned the right to bring their robotic masterpieces to the "Happiest Place on Earth" where they will form strategic alliances with other teams and challenge their toughest competitors playing the game *Round Up*. All attending teams qualified for the tournament after dedicating countless hours to honing their building, programming and strategy skill sets to outperform others in order to reach the international stage.

In addition to the middle and high school VEX Robotics Competitions, the 2011 VEX Robotics World Championship will put 35 university teams in the spotlight as they strive for the VEX Robotics College Challenge World Champion title. The BEST Robotics Competition National Championship will take place in the Jostens Center, and the U.S. Coast Guard Academy AROW water robotics competition will be held

at Champion Stadium. Boy Scouts of America will host a booth on Saturday, April 16, to showcase the new Robotics Merit Badge, and more than 20 scouts will be in attendance, aiming to be some of the first to complete the robotics merit badge requirements and receive the newly debuted badge from scout executives during the final award ceremony Saturday afternoon.

Partners and sponsors of the 2011 VEX Robotics Competition World Championship include Autodesk, NASA, EMC Corporation, Intelitek, Innovation First International, iD Tech Camps, the REC Foundation, Automation Direct, Northrop Grumman, Microchip, the United States Coast Guard Academy, and the Robotics Academy at Carnegie Mellon University.

*Round Up*, the 2010-2011 VEX Robotics Competition Game, is played on a 12'x12' square field where two alliances composed of two teams each compete against one another. Each match consists of a twenty-second autonomous period where robots are controlled by onboard software, followed by two minutes of human-operated play. Fans can follow the competition and sign up for real-time competition news and results via live streamcasts, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and YouTube updates. For more information visit [RobotEvents.com/championship](http://RobotEvents.com/championship).

#### **About REC Foundation**

The REC Foundation, standing for Robotics Education and Competition, is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization, supports robotics and technology events and programs that aim to inspire and motivate students to advance in STEM education. In addition to supporting competitions for some of the world's leading robotics platforms and organizations including VEX, TSA, BOTBALL and BEST, the foundation also provides program support and workshops focused on technology and professional development for educators – including the RobotEvents.com community portal website which helps promote multiple high quality programs and provides online registration and event pages for hundreds of events around the world.

#### **About VEX Robotics and Innovation First International**

VEX Robotics, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Innovation First International, is a leading provider of educational robotics products to middle schools, high schools and colleges around the world. The VEX Robotics Design System, winner of the 2006 Best of Innovations Award at CES, was built from the ground up and designed to be an affordable, accessible and scalable platform used to teach science, technology, engineering and math education worldwide. The company has over 250 man years of experience supporting educational robotics programs and extensive engineering resources on two continents dedicated to the VEX Robotics platform. For more information on the VEX Robotics Design System, visit [VEXRobotics.com](http://VEXRobotics.com).

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