



## **Tri County Tech's FIRST Robotics Team building on success**

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Tri County Tech's FIRST Robotics Team 2165 has been spending many hours after school planning, designing, and fabricating their robot to compete in Oklahoma City on March 29-31. And they are ready to go!

On March 12, the Robotics mentors and team members invited parents, friends, community members, and students to witness a demonstration of this year's robot in action completing tasks outlined by this year's "game" challenges.

FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics is an international program focused on applying STEM-related areas (science, technology, engineering, and math) in a fun and creative way. How? By challenging students, grades 9th through 12th, to build a robot capable of competing against dozens of other teams in regional competitions.

At multiple kickoff events on Jan. 6, at the same moment over the entire United States and several foreign countries, FIRST revealed this year's official game requirements. The reveal sets out game guidelines, mandatory fabrication specifications, and identifies what tasks will facilitate the robot in acquiring points during competition.

Thereafter, each team has exactly six weeks to build their robot and must stop building at a designated time. At competition, teams engage in matches in an attempt to acquire points. Each match begins with a 15-second autonomy portion where the robot's computer programming executes tasks. For the remaining two-and-a-half minutes, students control their robot to acquire additional points.

Instead of robots being designed to destroy competitors' robots, FIRST promotes practicing a concept called Gracious Professionalism where teams work together to promote each other's success. In the finals, an alliance of three

teams compete as one.

Because of this, students must learn to interact with other teams, engage in negotiations with other teams, and identify teams who are complementary with their robot's capabilities.

TCT's 10-member Robotics team consists of students from Bartlesville, Caney Valley, Nowata, and Home School. They are as follows: Keaton Allen, Dylan Beck, Bret Branstetter, Kaleb Brown, Elijah Ecklund, Jared Neal, Kent Slater, Jamie Templeton, Emily Wetzels, and Nick Hymel.

TCT's dedicated mentor team is as follows: George Halkiades, Gordon Stallings, Don Lauffer, Nelson Stayton, David Register, Malcolm Joyce, Steve Paetz, Lanny Seals, Rick Epps, and Leroy Cordill. TCT instructors Kendall Baker and Brenda Jackson play an important role as well.



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