

NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



4th Annual Rock River Off-Season Competition Returns July 30 *R2OC to Welcome 32 High School Robotics Teams to RVC's PE Center*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 27, 2016

ROCKFORD, IL – In its fourth year, the Rock River Off-Season Competition (R2OC), presented by Woodward, returns to the Rockford region on Saturday, July 30, at Rock Valley College (RVC). The event commences with the 8:45 a.m. opening ceremony, and continues with a regional robotics competition through 5 p.m. at RVC's Physical Education Center located at 3301 North Mulford Road, Rockford, IL 61114. R2OC, which sold out its 32 available registrations early this spring and will feature approximately 600 participants this year, is derived from the international [FIRST Robotics Competition® \(FRC\)](#) that combines sports with the rigors of science and technology.

"The R2OC committee is very excited to have 32 FIRST Robotics teams coming to Rock Valley College to compete on July 30," said Karen Hill, R2OC co-chair. "The students competing in this event are our future workforce. Our five local teams now have alumni interning or working at manufacturers in the Rock River Valley. Hosting this competition in Rockford gives the community a great opportunity to see our high school students compete with the robots they have built."

R2OC is the collaborative effort of various community partners, committee members and these five northern Illinois FIRST robotics teams: Flaming Monkeys from Belvidere, Metalheads from Freeport, Rockford Robotics, Stateline Robotics from Rockton and Winnovation from Winnebago. The competition supports Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) Education Coalition programs.

More than 3,000 teams comprised of 78,000+ students globally will compete for glory in this year's themed game, *FIRST STRONGHOLD*. Teams of 10 or more high school students (ages 14-18/grades 9-12) are challenged to build and program a robot to perform prescribed tasks against a field of competitors, raise funds, design a team brand and hone teamwork skills.

"R2OC is a positive environment for the youth in our region to showcase their technological skill set while applying it to a team-building challenge. This type of invaluable learning is crucial in the development of these future leaders," said Nick Povalitis, RACVB sports destination & sales manager. "The hope is that being exposed to this innovative way of learning will encourage these students to further their education and give them the continued desire to excel in future leadership roles. Opportunities like this will help our region's youth shape their goals and identify the strategic steps necessary to attain them."

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The teams of R2OC also are coordinating their annual Reach Out and Read Book Drive in conjunction with the 2016 event. Participants are encouraged to bring books for donation to the local Reach Out and Read chapter affiliated with Crusader Clinic. In its first three years, R2OC has donated 3,300 books.

The event will also feature interactive booth activities for youth interested in robotics, including demonstrations of the FIRST LEGO League (a table top game featuring grades 4-8) and FIRST Tech Challenge (a floor game featuring grades 7-12).

Admission to R2OC is free and concessions will be available. For more information, visit www.r2oc.org.

RACVB is a private, non-profit organization established in 1984 to champion efforts to promote the Rockford Region as an overnight visitor destination. The RACVB adds wealth to the region's economy by investing in marketing programs that grow tourism. www.gorockford.com

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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