

NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



Rock River Robotics Off-Season Competition Gives Back! *R2OC to Provide Scholarships to Four Participants, Grant Money Locally Again*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 24, 2018

ROCKFORD, IL – The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) is pleased to announce the return of the sixth annual **Rock River Robotics Off-season Competition (R2OC)**, a premier STEM-engagement showcase event produced by the R2OC committee and generously supported by titanium sponsors UTC Aerospace Systems and Woodward. Free to the public, 2018 R2OC is set for 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. this Saturday, July 28, at the **Rock Valley College PE Center**.

Under the stewardship of a local volunteer nonprofit board and committee, R2OC, a certified 501(c)(3) organization, will for the second-straight year offer up to four **\$1,000 scholarships to 2018 R2OC student participants—a \$4,000 total commitment** split evenly between R2OC and Rock Valley College Foundation. Furthermore, R2OC has earmarked up to **\$6,000 in grant funding for robotics programming** expenses exclusively for programs based in Boone, Stephenson and Winnebago counties—the three counties represented by the event's five host teams: Flaming Monkeys from Belvidere, Metalheads from Freeport, Rockford Robotics, Stateline Robotics from Rockton, and Winnovation from Winnebago and Pecatonica.

The R2OC scholarship application process was open for all student participants graduating in 2018 or 2019, and the winning recipients will be announced at Saturday's event. School districts within Boone, Stephenson and Winnebago counties that are interested in developing robotics programming for grades K-8 are encouraged to contact **grants@R2OC.org** about the R2OC grant opportunity.

"The R2OC Committee is ecstatic to bring this prestigious youth showcase back for year six, and to continue to give back to area youth through grants and the event's attendees through scholarships," says Karen Hill, R2OC co-chair. "The students competing in this event are our future workforce, and our five local teams now have alumni interning or working at manufacturers in the Rock River Valley. R2OC is a phenomenal organization for our community and it's a pleasure to work alongside so many talented students and partners."

For the second-straight year, RVC Foundation **allocated up to \$2,000 of additional scholarship funds** after R2OC announced the event's scholarship program.

"Rock Valley College has been a key partner of R2OC, and it is only fitting that the RVC Foundation has offered further scholarship opportunity for participating kids," says Chris Magee, R2OC co-chair. "R2OC

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has been fortunate to have received such great support from our community's educational and corporate base, and that has been integral in building a nonprofit organization that can give back in so many ways."

After a highly successful first half-decade, the **2018 R2OC will feature 36 teams from the Midwest**. The **STEM showcase event** will begin at **8:30 a.m. Saturday, July 28**, with an opening ceremony before continuing all day with robotics competitions until approximately 5 p.m. The 2018 field is projected to total **700 participants** and **2,000 fans from four states**.

R2OC's extensive 2018 give-back initiatives will also include a **Donation Drive for Just Breathe 815**, as each of the 36 participating teams are invited to donate new toiletry bags and items to assist Rockford area's homeless youth. Previously in its first five years, R2OC donated 5,500 books locally through a partnership with Reach Out and Read and Crusader Clinic.

This off-season event is derived from the international *FIRST* Robotics Competition (FRC), which combines sports with the rigors of science and technology. 2018 R2OC is modeled after **FIRST® POWER UP**, the 2018 season FRC game that includes two alliances of video game characters and their human operators who are trapped in an arcade game. Both alliances are working to defeat the boss in order to escape! This varsity sport for the mind features teams of 10 or more high school students who 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.

Admission to R2OC is free and concessions will be available. Please wear closed-toe shoes for access to the team pits. For complete event 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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