

NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 23, 2019

ROCKFORD, IL – The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) is pleased to announce the return of the seventh 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 Collins Aerospace, PCI Pharma Services, and Woodward. Free to the public, 2019 R2OC is set for 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. this Saturday, July 27, 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 third-straight year offer up to four **\$1,000 scholarships to 2019 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 2019 or 2020, and the winning recipients will be announced at Saturday’s event. School districts, clubs, and families 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.

“We’re excited to host our 7th Annual event,” says Karen Hill, R2OC co-chair. “This year’s registration was full in less than 3 hours! That tells us teams in the Midwest want to come to Rockford to compete!”

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

“The RACVB is proud to once again be a part of the Rock River Robotics Off-Season Competition,” says Nick Povalitis, RACVB Director of Sports Development and R2OC Board Member. “Events such as R2OC are an integral part of the RACVB mission.”

-MORE-

NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



R2OC/page 2 of 2

After a highly successful six years, the **2019 R2OC will feature 32 teams from the Midwest**. The **STEM showcase event** will begin at **8:30 a.m. Saturday, July 27**, with an opening ceremony before continuing all day with robotics competitions until approximately 5 p.m. The 2019 field is projected to total **700 participants** and **2,000 fans from four states**.

R2OC's extensive 2019 give-back initiatives will also include a **Donation Drive for animal shelters in each of the host teams' cities** as each of the 32 participating teams are invited to donate dog and cat food, pet toys, cleaning supplies and additional items to assist regional animal shelters. Previously in its first five years, R2OC donated 5,500 books locally through a partnership with Reach Out and Read and Crusader Clinic. Last year's event contributed a large donation of personal care items to Just Breathe 815.

This off-season event is derived from the international *FIRST* Robotics Competition (FRC), which combines sports with the rigors of science and technology. 2019 R2OC is modeled after **Destination: Deep Space**, the 2019 season FRC game that includes two alliances placing hatch panels on rockets and cargo bays and then loading cargo! Bonus end game points are awarded for teams lifting their robots onto Hab platforms. 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

###

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Andrea Cook, RACVB Associate Director of Marketing & Communications: 815.489.1664 or acook@gorockford.com