



Championship Event Showcases Tomorrow's Engineers: Students Jumpstart Careers Through Autodesk and FIRST Robotics Competition

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Hands-On Experience with Autodesk Software Prepares Students for Future Careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math

SAN RAFAEL, Calif., April 10 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- As some of the best young minds in the world converge on Atlanta's Georgia Dome for the FIRST Robotics Competition Championship April 12-14, Autodesk, Inc.'s (Nasdaq: ADSK) commitment to the next generation of engineers will be showcased on an international stage. The event is the culmination of 37 regional competitions held earlier this year featuring 1,300 teams from seven countries. Autodesk is supporting the competition through a \$17 million software donation, granting student participants first-hand experience with state-of-the-art 3D technology -- Autodesk Inventor and Autodesk 3ds Max software -- which they used to design and pre-visualize their robots. Autodesk's support reflects a shared mission with FIRST to create ongoing passion for science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and encourage students to pursue careers in engineering.

(Logo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20050415/SFF034LOGO>)

Over the course of its 16 consecutive years as a FIRST sponsor, Autodesk has contributed approximately \$72 million of software and training and has influenced many of today's engineers. FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) competition alumni have applied skills learned from this experience to prominent internships, university engineering programs and careers in the engineering field.

"Autodesk's contribution to the FIRST competition really gives students a hands-on experience with advanced design software, which is a tremendous foundation in pursuing an engineering career," said Christopher Edmonds, former FIRST competitor and current Oregon State University engineering student. "From FIRST, I went on to two NASA internships and Oregon State University, where I am now double-majoring in electrical engineering and computer science. Using Autodesk software for the FIRST competition was my introduction to any type of 3D modeling program. The FIRST competition opened up a lot of opportunities for me and gave me the motivation I needed to pursue my current career track."

Training the next wave of engineers is becoming an increasingly important task. Recently, the U.S. Census Bureau indicated there will be 78 million people leaving the workforce over the next 16 years, and there will be only 48 million new entrants. With the Department of Workforce Development recently projecting an 18.6 percent increase in the number of available engineering jobs in the United States between 2004 and 2014, there is a clear gap in available engineers on the horizon.

"If the United States is to maintain its world leadership in manufacturing, we must develop a new generation of innovative engineers who will keep us on the cutting edge of emerging technologies and scientific breakthroughs," said John Engler, president of the National Association of Manufacturers and former Michigan Governor. "The global marketplace today is more competitive than ever before, and nowhere is that competition more intense than in manufacturing. This wonderful program will help attract and encourage our brightest young minds to the technology challenge. I commend Autodesk for its generous support of the 2007 FIRST Robotics Competition and the student participants. Let the 2007 FIRST Robotics Competition Championship begin!"

A potential group of future engineers is the Ragin' C-Biscuits, team #1280 from San Ramon Valley High School in California, who are betting on their robot to take them beyond the FIRST Championship and into a promising career path. The team's quest picked up momentum after winning the Silicon Valley Regional at San Jose State University in March. The team used Inventor software to design the winning robot.

"We were able to create components of the robot in the virtual world using Inventor before we started machining parts, which helps save a lot of time with rebuilds," said Shareef Ghanem, member of the Ragin' C-Biscuits. "The experience of engineering and designing something with professional tools is good preparation for engineering programs in college and in our future careers."

The Ragin' C-Biscuits is one of 1,300 teams from around the world competing in the FIRST Robotics Competition -- teams like Eagle Strike, team #114 from Los Altos High School in California, who designed its entire robot with Inventor software. Eagle Strike made it to the semifinals of the Silicon Valley Regional and won the region's Autodesk Visualization Award, which is presented to the team with the best 30-second 3D animation based on this year's contest theme of "Think Green." The video can be viewed at: www.autodesk.com/firstbase. The submissions were designed with 3ds Max -- a 3D modeling animation and rendering software, and an overall competition winner will be crowned at the Championship.

"Autodesk is strengthening the engineering talent pool of tomorrow by fostering excitement and passion for careers in science, technology, engineering and math," said Robert "Buzz" Kross, vice president of Autodesk Manufacturing Solutions. "Through the FIRST competition, we are providing a fun, creative way to simulate real-world challenges, develop teamwork skills and encourage Gracious Professionalism. Autodesk gives students the power to dream tomorrow's big ideas today by placing technology used by professionals in their hands."

About Autodesk Education

Autodesk supports worldwide academic achievement and lifelong learning by providing 2D and 3D solutions for teaching and learning design in the fields of manufacturing, industrial design, architecture, construction, civil engineering and media and entertainment. Autodesk is committed to helping the next generation of engineers, architects and designers experience their ideas before they are real by making state-of-the-art digital prototyping solutions available inside and outside of the classroom through substantial discounts, subscriptions, grant programs, training, curricula development and community resources. For more information about Autodesk's education programs and solutions, visit www.autodesk.com/education.

About Autodesk

Autodesk, Inc., is the world leader in 2D and 3D design software for the manufacturing, building and construction, and media and entertainment markets. Since its introduction of AutoCAD software in 1982, Autodesk has developed the broadest portfolio of state-of-the-art digital prototyping solutions to help customers experience their ideas before they are real. Fortune 1000 companies rely on Autodesk for the tools to visualize, simulate

and analyze real-world performance early in the design process to save time and money, enhance quality and foster innovation. For additional information about San Rafael, Calif.-based Autodesk, visit www.autodesk.com

About FIRST

FIRST, based in Manchester, N.H., is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit public charity founded in 1989 to inspire young people's interest and participation in science and technology. The FIRST Robotics Competition is a unique varsity sport for the mind designed to help high-school-aged young people discover how interesting and rewarding the life of engineers and researchers can be. The competition challenges teams of young people and their mentors to solve a common problem in a six-week timeframe using a standard "kit of parts" and a common set of rules. Teams build robots from the parts and enter them in a series of competitions. This year's game is "Rack 'N' Roll," which includes having students' robots place inflatable colored tubes on "spider legs" of a rack structure. To learn more, go to www.usfirst.org.

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