

Mini-Urban Challenge coming Saturday to Civic Center

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On Saturday, February 19, high school students from across the region will converge on the Bossier Civic Center and prove that playing with LEGOs® can be both educational and competitive at the 2nd Annual Regional Competition of the Mini-Urban Challenge.

The challenge requires high school students to design and operate a robotic car to autonomously navigate a LEGO® city.

Throughout the twelve hour event, teams will exercise their skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) as well as articulate their understanding of STEM skills and robotics during an oral presentation.

Additionally, teams will have the opportunity to compete in two separate robotics challenges sponsored and presented by Louisiana Tech University faculty.

Seventeen teams from Bossier, Caddo, Lincoln, Morehouse, Natchitoches, Ouachita, and Webster Parishes will participate in the competition.

The Mini-Urban Challenge is a national competition sponsored by The Institute of Navigation and the United States Air Force Research Laboratory. Due to the Cyber Innovation Center's (CIC) efforts to promote STEM education, Bossier City was selected as a regional host site last year.

Bossier City is now one of six regional competitions that precede the national competition. Other regional sites are Valparaiso, Florida; Los Angeles, California; Washington, DC; Boston, Massachusetts; and Dayton, Ohio. First and second place winners of each regional competition are invited to compete in the 2011 National Competition.

The 2011 National Competition will be held at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History on May 21, 2011, in Washington, DC. Last year, the "Black Team" from Parkway High School (1st Place) and the "Tiger Team" from Benton High School (2nd Place) advanced to the 2010 National Competition with Parkway High School earning second place and a \$1,500 prize.

The Mini-Urban Challenge, a facet of the CIC's Academic Outreach Program, is designed to challenge and encourage students' interest in STEM fields. The CIC supports numerous initiatives and fosters dynamic partnerships that promote STEM education in area schools, which will, in turn, help to build a sustainable knowledge-based workforce that can support the needs of government, industry and academia.