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Science Foundation Arizona Awards $250K Robotics Grant to AZFIRST
Supports eight new and seven existing robotics clubs in rural high schools

PHOENIX (Nov. 4, 2013) – Science Foundation Arizona (SFAz) has awarded AZFIRST a $250K robotics grant over three-years as part of SFAz’s Rural and Remote Initiative. When SFAz conducted its Rural and Remote Education Needs Survey in May 2013, educators identified as a top priority the need to increase after school clubs in science, math or robotics programs.

As a result, the grant from SFAz will support eight new and seven existing high school robotics clubs as well as provide additional support for the 2014 and 2015 annual FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC). FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology), a nonprofit supported by AZFIRST, connects high school students, educators, the community and industry in a collaborative effort to teach students STEM principles. Through a team-driven approach, students will participate in a robot-building project that culminates in an exciting, fast-paced robotics competition.

“We're pleased to provide this support to AZFIRST to help increase the robotics clubs in rural high schools. Programs like these expose students to real-world engineering challenges, boost problem-solving skills and build teamwork – all critical career components,” said Mary O’Reilly, scientific program officer for SFAz.

The SFAz grant will also fund teacher stipends, travel, registration fees and supply expenses for the fifteen rural high school FRC teams in Arizona. The existing FRC teams include:

- Kingman High School (Kingman)
- Casa Grande Union High School (Case Grande)
- Buena High School (Sierra Vista)
- Coconino High School (Flagstaff)
- Superior High School (Superior)
- Yuma High School (Yuma)
- Kofa High School (Yuma)

The new FRC teams include:

- Alchesay High School (Whiteriver)
- Globe High School (Globe)
- San Carlos High School (San Carlos)
- Cibola High School (Yuma)
- **Coolidge High School** (Coolidge)
- **Round Valley High School** (Eagar)
- **Tuba City High School** (Tuba City)
- **Tombstone High School** (Tombstone)

“This multi-year grant from SFAz provides AZFirst an opportunity to expand our reach throughout Arizona by providing this hands-on robot building experience to more students. This is a significant benefit to STEM education and to the Arizona economy,” said Carol Popovich, Senior STEM Outreach Programs Representative with Microchip Technology Inc and Principal Investigator for AZFirst, the 501(c) 3 charity started by Microchip to support philanthropic STEM programs.

As part of the grant agreement, the veteran teams will help mentor the new teams. By year three of the grant, these new teams will mentor another club in rural Arizona to help ensure continued growth and sustainability.

The FRC 2014 Arizona Regional competition will take place March 21-22 in Chandler. Students who participate on a FIRST team are eligible to apply for more than $16 million in scholarship opportunities.

**About Science Foundation Arizona**

Science Foundation Arizona (SFAz) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization initiated in 2006 by the Greater Phoenix Leadership Inc., Southern Arizona Leadership Council and the Flagstaff Forty in conjunction with the executive and legislative branches of state government. SFAz serves as a catalyst for high-wage, knowledge-based jobs and economic diversity through administration and strict oversight of research, development and education grants to public education and other non-profit research performing institutions. For more information, visit [www.sfaz.org](http://www.sfaz.org).

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