



Contact: Madison Fantozzi
863.298.6872/954.594.9808
mfantozzi@polk.edu
polk.edu

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Polk State College to Host *FIRST* LEGO League Championship

Winter Haven, February 2, 2018 — Polk State College is scheduled to host the *FIRST* LEGO League Central Florida Regional Championship on Sunday, February 18, bringing together nearly 1,500 elementary and middle school students, as well as LEGO enthusiasts.

Forty-eight teams of fourth- to eighth-grade students from eight counties will compete in the championship from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Polk State Winter Haven Health Center/Gym (WHC), 999 Ave. H N.E., where they will program LEGO MINDSTORMS robots they have built to participate in challenges related to hydrodynamics.

“This year’s theme is all about water and the entire water cycle, including how we find, transport, use, and dispose of water,” said Naomi Boyer, Polk State Vice President of Strategic Initiatives and Innovation, and Chief Information Officer. “The regional competition is, for many, the end of the season and advancement of learning that has taken place from August to February. Students will compete in robot runs and judging sessions, all while exhibiting ‘gracious professionalism’ and problem-solving core values.”

Volunteer judges from various fields, including engineering, construction, information technology, education, and business, will evaluate the teams in three areas: their projects, their core values, and their robot design.

Projects must be based on a part of the human water cycle and identify a specific problem to solve, and the teams will participate in a building challenge exercise that will allow them to demonstrate their core values.

A dozen teams will move on to a state-level tournament, where one winning team will be selected to participate in international invitational events.

In addition to the championship, younger children will have the opportunity to participate in the *FIRST* LEGO League Jr. Expo on Saturday, February 17, at LEGOLAND Florida Resort, where they will test machines they have built using LEGO elements and motorized parts.

Both events will be great spectating opportunities for anyone interested in LEGO construction and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education.

LEGOLAND Florida Resort is offering substantially discounted tickets February 17, 18, and 19 for all participating teams, their families, and friends. Part of the proceeds will go to the Polk State College Foundation, which provides the College with student scholarships and other resources. [Tickets are available online.](#)

Those interested in attending the *FIRST* Lego League Central Florida Regional Championship should contact Christy Canady at ccanady@polk.edu or 863.298.6859.

[*FIRST \(For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology\)*](#) is an all-inclusive, character-drive, K-12 education program that uses robot challenges to build science and technology skills and interests. More than 10,000 students participate in *FIRST* statewide.

[*FIRST LEGO League*](#) is an alliance between *FIRST* and LEGO to engage children in playful and meaningful learning while helping them discover the fun in science and technology through the *FIRST* LEGO League experience.

Polk State's involvement with *First* LEGO League is just one of many robotics education initiatives at the College, including its STEM-based Enrichment Academy; summer programs Kids at College and TALON Robotics; partnership with Technobotics Academy at Winter Haven High School; Associate in Science in Engineering Technology Program; and variety of other certificate programs related to manufacturing robotics.

"Robotics is a great way to engage young students and the skills they learn early in life related to robotics can lead to their future careers," Boyer said. "Polk State College is committed to building those pathways for our community and students."

About Polk State College

Located in Winter Haven, Florida, and established in 1964, Polk State College is a multi-campus institution serving more than 16,000 students with Bachelor of Applied Science, Bachelor of Science, Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degrees, as well as a wide range of certificate and workforce training options. The College also operates three charter high schools. Polk State's advantages include small class sizes; hands-on learning; dedicated faculty; day and night classes; online options; affordable tuition; excellent financial aid; and a diverse community and vibrant student life, including fine arts opportunities, clubs, and intercollegiate athletics.