

News Release



Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas

Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas partner with Arkansas FIRST *Innovative robotics program stresses science, technology and math skills*

Little Rock, Ark. — March 6, 2018 — The Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas have entered a partnership with Arkansas FIRST, a volunteer-based, non-profit organization founded to ensure every Arkansas student has access to competitive robotics education programs.

“The Arkansas FIRST Robotics Competition provides great learning opportunities for students,” said Rob Roedel, corporate communications manager for the cooperatives. “We will work with Arkansas FIRST volunteers to promote and support the program. Our goal is to get teams in all 75 Arkansas counties and eventually hold four competitions within Arkansas to provide students with maximum exposure to science, math and technology.”

This year’s multi-state competition will be held in Little Rock and include approximately 3,500 contestants from eight states and Mexico. Arkansas’ teams will include students from Arkadelphia, Batesville, Bentonville, Booneville, Conway, DeWitt, Farmington, Fayetteville, Hope, Kirby, Mayflower, Mount Vernon, Mountain Home, Mulberry, Newark, North Little Rock, Pangburn, Pine Bluff, Pleasant Plains, Rogers, Searcy, Springdale and Texarkana. In addition to Arkansas, teams from Alabama, California, Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas will also compete in the event.

According to Meredith Novak, president of Arkansas FIRST, the robotics program combines the excitement of sport with the rigors of science and technology.

“We are thrilled to partner with the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas to expand the Arkansas FIRST program throughout the state,” she said. “The program features strict rules, limited resources and time limits with teams of 25 students or more being challenged to raise funds, design a team brand, hone teamwork skills, and build and program robots to perform prescribed tasks against a field of competitors. Volunteer professional mentors lend their time and talents to guide each team. We look forward to a great partnership with the cooperatives.”

The 2018 Arkansas Rock City Regional FIRST Robotics Competition will be held on March 8-10 at Barton Coliseum in Little Rock. At least 55 Arkansas and regional high schools will bring 3,500 students, teachers, mentors, sponsors, spectators and family members to the event.

The Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas comprise 17 electric distribution cooperatives; Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (AECI), a Little Rock-based cooperative that provides services to the distribution cooperatives; and Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corp. (AECC), a generation and transmission cooperative. The distribution cooperatives provide electricity to approximately 500,000 homes, farms and businesses in Arkansas and surrounding states.

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