



NEWS

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Student Teams Shooting for Team America Rocketry Challenge Final

Arlington, Va. – Student rocket teams are preparing their launch vehicles for qualification flights in the opening round of the world’s largest rocket contest.

A total of 653 teams from 45 states and the District of Columbia has registered for the 2009 Team America Rocketry Challenge – the seventh installment of the annual competition.

The contest challenges 3- to 10-member teams to design and build model rockets by hand, then successfully launch them and return a raw-egg payload to the ground unbroken. This year’s contest goals are an altitude of 750 feet and a flight time of 45 seconds. The rockets must transport one egg laid horizontally to mimic the position of an astronaut.

The 100 teams with the best qualifying scores make it to the final round fly-off at Great Meadow in The Plains, Va., (near Washington, D.C.) on May 16. The teams registered for the contest in December and have until April 6 to submit a qualifying score.

AIA sponsors the annual contest, along with the National Association of Rocketry and several partners: NASA, the Defense Department, the American Association of Physics Teachers and three dozen AIA member companies.

The goal is to increase interest in science, math and engineering education among middle and high school students to ultimately steer them to careers in aerospace. The industry faces a workforce challenge as many current employees are nearing retirement eligibility.

There is plenty at stake for the teams – the total purse is \$60,000 in scholarships and prizes. Two AIA companies provide additional prize premiums. Lockheed Martin gives \$5,000 in scholarship funds to each of the top three teams, and Raytheon pays for the winning team to attend the International Paris Air Show in June. Some of the top teams may also be invited to take part in the NASA Student Launch Initiative, an advanced rocketry program.

Since the first TARC in 2003, about 50,000 students have taken part.

For more information visit the Web site www.rocketcontest.org.

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