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CONTACT: Heidi McKinley
214-789-9332
heidi@mw-communications.com

Gail Whitcomb
214-704-4132
gail@mw-communications.com

2011 *FIRST*[®] ROBOTICS COMPETITION, DALLAS REGIONAL
SPONSORED BY JCPENNEY SHOWCASES LOCAL TEENS
Competition Celebrates North Texas' Commitment to the Sciences

DALLAS (February 8, 2011) – The 2011 *FIRST*[®] Robotics Competition (FRC) recently kicked off with this year's game "LOGO MOTION." More than 1,225 high school students participating on 49 teams will compete at the Dallas Regional sponsored by JCPenney April 7–9 at the Dallas Convention Center. Thirty-three North Texas teams will compete with additional Texas teams, a team from Louisiana and two teams from Mexico. Area sponsors supporting the initiative include title sponsor JCPenney, lead sponsor Lockheed Martin, The Greater Texas Foundation, the J. Paul Grayson Foundation and DeVry University.

The 20th anniversary of the FRC marks the third year the regional has been held in Dallas. In 2009, Governor Rick Perry announced an initiative supported by the Texas Workforce Commission to expand robotics programs throughout the state. Since then, Texas *FIRST* teams have increased by 68 percent. The competition engages teens with a science, technology, engineering and math challenge and presents new career paths as participants begin to consider college. Additionally, *FIRST* is a critical part of the overall Texas economic development program as the program builds future leaders in these areas.

"The *FIRST* program helps teens in so many ways. Participation builds self-confidence, leadership, communications and social skills, responsibility and team-building skills while motivating youth to pursue opportunities in science, technology and engineering," said John Shellene, regional director for North Texas *FIRST*. "*FIRST* is about more than building robots – it's about shaping the future of Texas and America. More than 88 percent of *FIRST* participants go on to college with \$12.2 million awarded in scholarships every year."

"JCPenney has made *FIRST* an integral part of our philanthropic mission to support youth development through positive learning opportunities after school," said Mike Theilmann, group executive vice president for JCPenney and chairman of JCPenney Afterschool. "Our growing sponsorship of 500 *FIRST* teams nationwide – including 25 teams in North Texas – is making it possible for thousands of students to get involved in robotics for the first time. By introducing *FIRST* to more communities, we are increasing students' aptitude in science and math and inspiring a passion for invention that will forever shape their lives."

“Lockheed Martin believes that *FIRST* makes a tremendous difference in the lives of the teens that participate,” said Don Schapker, director of mechanical engineering for Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control. “The company makes a significant commitment to *FIRST* teams every year not only through financial sponsorship, but even more importantly, by providing teams with mentors that work hands-on with the students. The students have an opportunity to interact with working engineers who can explain how a career in engineering and science can be rewarding both personally and financially. Kids finally get an answer to the timeless question, ‘When am I ever going to use this math?’ “

FIRST teams have received their “LOGO MOTION” Kit of Parts made up of motors, batteries, a control system, a PC and a mix of automation components – but no instructions. Working with advisors, technology experts and engineers who lend their time as mentors, students have six weeks to design, build, program and test their robots to meet the season’s engineering challenge. Each robot costs approximately \$20,000 to create. Once these young inventors create a robot, their teams participate in a regional, and compete for the opportunity to participate at the national competition held this year in St. Louis, Mo. *FIRST* competitions measure the effectiveness of each robot, the power of collaboration and the determination of the students. To support the Dallas Regional Sponsored by JCPenney, see www.dallas.txfirst.org.

About *FIRST*

Accomplished inventor Dean Kamen founded *FIRST*® (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) in 1989 to inspire an appreciation of science and technology in young people. Based in Manchester, N.H. *FIRST* designs accessible, innovative programs to build self-confidence, knowledge, and life skills while motivating young people to pursue opportunities in science, technology and engineering.

FRC is an annual competition that helps students to discover the excitement of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and the rewards a career in STEM can bring. More than 50,000 high-school students from the U.S., Australia, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Israel, Mexico, Turkey, and the U.K. will participate in this year’s competition.

FIRST programs are spearheaded by more than 90,000 dedicated volunteers worldwide, most of them professional engineers and scientists who mentor the next generation of innovators. To get more information, go to www.usfirst.org.

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