



AZFirst Receives Science Foundation Arizona Grant to Support FIRST® Robotics Competition in Arizona

CHANDLER, Ariz.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Microchip Technology Inc. (NASDAQ: MCHP), a leading provider of microcontroller, mixed-signal, analog and Flash-IP solutions, today announced that [AZFirst](#), an Arizona 501(c)3 organization supporting *FIRST*® (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) after-school programs in Arizona, is the recipient of a \$260,000 grant funded over three years from [Science Foundation Arizona](#) (SFAz). *FIRST* connects high school students, educators, the community and industry in a collaborative effort to teach students STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) principles through a team-driven robot-building project that culminates in an exciting, fast-paced, robotics competition. In addition to providing funding to support the [FIRST Robotics Competition](#) (FRC) 2014 and 2015 Arizona Regional competitions, the grant will fund teacher stipends, travel, registration fees and supplies expenses for fifteen rural high school FRC teams in Arizona.

The schools involved include seven veteran FRC teams (Kingman High School; Casa Grande Union High School; Buena High School; Coconino High School; Superior High School; Yuma High School and Kofa High School). The rookie rural schools include Alchesay High School, Globe High School, San Carlos High School, Cibola High School, Coolidge High School, Round Valley High School, Tuba City High School and Tombstone High School. The funding will cover three years of support.

“SFAz is pleased to support AZFirst in its efforts to increase the number of robotic clubs in Arizona while providing students with high value STEM learning opportunities,” said Dr. Mary O’Reilly, SFAz program officer. Students who participate on a *FIRST* team are eligible to apply for more than \$16 million in scholarship opportunities. The teams will compete in the FRC 2014 Arizona Regional, which will be held March 21-22, 2014 at Hamilton High School in Chandler, Arizona. The event is free and open to the public.

By working with industry mentors, students in the *FIRST* program learn engineering, physics, programming and science, in addition to other life skills such as critical thinking, public speaking, creativity and time management. Carol Popovich, Senior STEM Outreach Programs Representative with Microchip Technology Inc., is the Principal Investigator for the grant.

Steve Sanghi, President and CEO of Microchip Technology Inc., Co-Chair of the Arizona *FIRST* Planning Committee, and a member of the *FIRST* Board of Directors, said, “*FIRST* isn’t about building robots—it’s about developing life skills. The kids learn skills about relationship building, teamwork, finance, fundraising and project management.”

In order to receive the grants, the teams must agree to mentor new robotics teams in rural Arizona, ensuring the growth of the program. “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 huge benefit to STEM education and to the Arizona economy,” said Popovich.

For more information about AZFirst or *FIRST* in Arizona, contact Carol Popovich at (480)792-7938 or first@microchip.com. For more information about Science Foundation Arizona, contact The Lavidge Company 480.998.2600, Kendra Schmitt x562, kschmitt@lavidge.com or Teri Morris x577, tmorris@lavidge.com.

Resources

High-res *FIRST* logo Available Through Flickr or Editorial Contact (feel free to publish):
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About Science Foundation Arizona

Science Foundation Arizona (SFAz) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization initiated in 2006 by the Greater Phoenix Leadership Inc., Southern Arizona Leadership Council and the Flagstaff Forty. Its goal is to build and strengthen science, engineering and biomedicine in areas of greatest strategic value to Arizona's competitiveness in the global economy. SFAz is investing in partnerships between non-profit research institutions and industry, and in the education pipeline to attract and support a knowledge-driven economy.

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. To learn more about *FIRST*, go to <http://www.microchip.com/get/QNRT>.

The FRC challenges teams of young people and their mentors to solve a common problem in a six-week timeframe using a standard “kit of parts” and a common set of rules. Teams build robots from the parts and enter them in a series of competitions designed by Dean

Kamen, Dr. Woodie Flowers, and a committee of engineers and other professionals. Students participating on *FIRST* teams are eligible to apply for more than \$17 million in scholarships.

Chandler-based Microchip Technology is the Organizing Sponsor and a “Leader in Technology Sponsor” of the FRC 2014 Arizona Regional.

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