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April 9, 2014

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Huntsville students place within top 100 of world's largest rocket contest. Our team is the only team from Alabama and Tennessee to make the top 100.

The Falcon Rocketeers (students from Butler H.S. Hampton Cove M.S., Grissom H.S. and JP2CHS) head to Nation's Capital to compete against hundreds of future aerospace leaders

Huntsville, AL: Eight students from the Falcon Rocketeers beat out more than 700 teams from across the country to advance to the national finals of the Team America Rocketry Challenge (TARC). After months of preparation and a strong showing in TARC's qualifying round, team [Your team name] will travel to Great Meadow in The Plains, Va. for a final fly-off on May 10.

With 5,000 annual participants, TARC is the world's largest student rocket contest and a key piece of the aerospace industry's strategy to build a stronger U.S. workforce in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). In one of the most difficult challenges in the competition's 12-year history, teams must design and build a model rocket that can travel to exactly 825 feet and back within 48-50 seconds while carrying precious cargo — two raw eggs that must return safely to the ground undamaged.

This is the seventh time the team made the top 100 teams in the United States since 2007 and the 6th year in a row they have represented Alabama. "Exposure to aerospace through TARC has had a positive impact on students' career choices, as 81% of the past team members plan/are pursuing career in science, technology, engineering, and/or math," said Barbara Murphy, lead teacher. "From this experience, the team also had two payload projects selected to be launched in July of this year on the ULA (United Launch Alliance) and BEGi (Bell Engineering Group, Inc) intern rocket in Pueblo, CO. This is a diverse team with students from across the city. I'm thrilled at how well they worked together to achieve what they have."

The Falcon Rocketeer's team is competing for $60,000 in scholarships and prizes, as well as bragging rights for earning the national title. The winning team will travel to the Farnborough International Air Show in England this July to launch against students from the United Kingdom and France in an international rocketry contest.

Sponsored by the Aerospace Industries Association, the National Association of Rocketry and many aerospace industry partners, TARC aims to bolster U.S. student engagement with STEM. In a 2010 survey among competition alumni, approximately 80 percent of respondents said they planned to pursue a STEM-focused college major.

“This TARC team is the best team I have ever been with. I have learned so much. This has been the time of my life to build a rocket that requires certain requirements and it is an awesome experience.” Matthew Kellogg. The Falcon Rocketeers are unique because of the diversity of the team. The students are in grades seven through 12 and come from schools across the city. They learned that everyone has weaknesses and strengths and by working as a team, they took advantage of the strengths to produce the best possible results. “I’m so proud of how hard our students worked to compete this year,” said Duane Mayer, an engineer and mentor for the team. “These are truly innovative kids who have gained tremendous experience with problem-solving, teamwork and finding creative solutions.”

For more information about TARC 2014, please visit www.rocketcontest.org.

What makes this year’s competition unique?

2014’s dual-parachute requirement combined with the tight timing window and other structural criteria make this contest the most difficult in the competition’s 12-year history.

What is the Team America Rocketry Challenge?

- The Team America Rocketry Challenge (TARC) is the largest student rocket contest in the world — approximately 5,000 students participate each year.

- TARC gives middle and high school students a chance to pursue their interests in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

- While TARC was created in 2002 as a one-time celebration of the Centennial of Flight, it generated so much excitement from students and teachers that contest organizers, the Aerospace Industries Association (AIA) and National Association of Rocketry (NAR), decided to make the contest an annual event. Since then, TARC has become an important part of the STEM community and has encouraged thousands of students to pursue STEM education and careers.

When and where will the National Finals take place?

The National Finals will take place on Saturday, May 10, 2014 at Great Meadow in The Plains, VA, about 50 miles west of Washington, D.C. If necessary, we scheduled a rain date for May 11.

Who can participate in TARC?

All students currently enrolled in grades 7-12 can participate, either through a school or sponsoring organization (like 4-H or a home-schooled group). Each team must have 3-10 students, and each school or organization cannot enroll more than five teams.