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For Immediate Release

**ROBOTS INVADING GEORGIA:
PEACHTREE REGIONAL FIRST ROBOTICS COMPETITION COMES TO
ATLANTA MARCH 28-29**

ATLANTA – March 24, 2003 – Robots will invade Georgia as the first-ever Peachtree Regional FIRST Robotics competition gets underway March 28 and 29 at the Gwinnett Civic Center, event organizers announced today.

An estimated 1,500 students, teachers and mentors from 45 high schools representing 12 states and Puerto Rico will participate in the inaugural Peachtree Regional FIRST Robotics Competition. Students from 15 Georgia schools from metro Atlanta and the Savannah area also plan to compete. The event is free and open to the public.

David Lavery, program executive for Solar System Exploration for NASA, will be the keynote speaker at the Opening Ceremony beginning at 9 a.m. Saturday. NASA is a major sponsor of the national competition, and provided 11 scholarships to Georgia-based high schools.

“This competition is a wonderful way to translate student interest in science, technology and engineering from a theoretical classroom activity into reality, and is just one of the ways NASA hopes to inspire the next generation of explorers and inventors,” said Lavery.

For the past six weeks, high school teams have designed and built an original robot from a crate of parts. Engineering mentors from area colleges and businesses helped the students construct the robots, which can weigh no more than 130 pounds and have a maximum starting size of five feet tall.

During the Peachtree Regional, the teams will compete head-to-head, testing their skills in teamwork, strategy, design and sportsmanship. This year's game, "Stack Attack," requires each team of robots to collect and stack containers on their side of the playing field while avoiding the competing team who is working to sabotage their efforts. The location of the robots, containers and the height of the stacks at the end of the match determine each team's score for the round.

"The Peachtree Regional is about building self-confidence, knowledge and life skills while motivating young people to pursue opportunities in science, technology and engineering," said Pattie Cook, FIRST Southeast regional director. "It's an exciting competition to watch and everyone is welcome to cheer on the students as they negotiate the obstacles on the playing field."

Several teams from the Peachtree Regional plan to attend the FIRST Robotics championship event April 10-12 at Reliant Park in Houston, Texas.

For more information on the Peachtree Regional FIRST Robotics competition, call the Southeast FIRST office at 804-784-4898 or visit FIRST online at www.usfirst.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, their schools and their communities. 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. With the support of many of the world's most well known companies, the

non-profit organization hosts the FIRST Robotics Competition for high school students and the FIRST LEGO™ League for children nine to 14 years old. To learn more about FIRST and the FIRST Robotics Competition go to www.usfirst.org.

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