

Robotics competition launches this Saturday

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Ready, aim, launch! The Regional Autonomous Robotics Circuit (RARC) is introducing an exciting challenge to elementary and middle school students by incorporating the timeless elements of the catapult with the advanced capabilities of present technology.

This Saturday, Feb. 9, approximately 600 students from across the region will participate in this year's third RARC competition. RARC is a series of four STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) competitions for students in grades 4-12. The competitions build upon one another and allow students to showcase their STEM skills by competing against other students within their division in a series of STEM and liberal arts challenges. Competition III will be held at the Bossier Civic Center and is sponsored by the Cyber Innovation Center's National Integrated Cyber Education Research Center, the City of Bossier City, Sci-Port: Louisiana's Science Center, and Bossier Parish Schools.

Prior to Competition III, teams have prepared by researching, designing, and building catapults. Teams will earn points by using their catapults to knock down as many of the opposing teams' pins as possible. Competition III will incorporate a liberal arts component as well by having students research the major developments of the catapult and create team banners to emphasize their design concepts. In the true spirit of Medieval competition, teams will include a Coat of Arms in their design, which will be the focal point of their banner.

Over 130 elementary and middle school teams from Bossier, Caddo, DeSoto, and Natchitoches Parishes and Harrison County, Texas, will compete in Competition III. High school teams are scheduled to participate in the Mini-Urban Challenge on Saturday, March 2, in lieu of this competition. The media and general public are invited to attend Competition III on Saturday, February 9, 2012, from 7:30 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. at the Bossier Civic Center. The winners for the elementary division will be announced at approximately 10:30 a.m. while the winners of the middle school division will be announced at approximately 1 p.m. For more information regarding the 2012-2013 RARC, please visit www.nicerc.org/regional-autonomous-robotics-circuit/.