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## **BEST Competition sparks interest in young people, seeks volunteers**

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The North Dakota State University Bison BEST Robotics Competition looks to pique students' interest and encourages them to pursue careers in engineering, science and other technical fields.



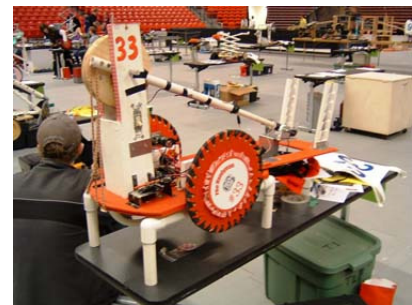
The "playing field" sets the stage for the BEST Competition.

While the world continues to produce more engineers, scientists and technical professionals, the number of students entering these fields has not kept up with demand. Many employers are now competing for a small number of qualified future employees.

The College of Engineering and Architecture at North Dakota State University (NDSU) is looking to increase its K-12 outreach and encourage young people to get involved in science, math and technology fields. In the fall of 2007, NDSU will host for the first time the Bison BEST Robotics Competition in cooperation with Best Robotics, Inc.

BEST Robotics competitions bring together teams of middle and high school students competing in sports-like science and engineering-based robotics competitions. The competitions take place across the country at hubs, or geographically organized locations. Each school can send one team to the competition and there are a minimum of 8 teams competing at each hub. Each team designs and builds a radio-controlled machine, or robot, to accomplish defined tasks in a game-type format.

Teams are given a kit of materials from which to build their robot and a kit of materials that will be used to power their robot. Over the course of six weeks, the teams design and build their robot, complying with a set of rules and guidelines. Although the students must complete all the work on their own, volunteers, teachers, engineers and other professionals serve as team mentors to guide the students through the process.



Teams of students use materials provided to build and power remote controlled robot creations.

The best thing about the Bison BEST Competition is that it's free for the students. However, the Competition does rely on and need sponsor funding for material kits and recruiting efforts for volunteers, referees, judges and mentors. The program is looking for volunteers to be mentors, judges and referees. If you would like to volunteer or for more information, please contact Nancy Rossland at 701.231.7994 or [nancy.rossland@ndsu.edu](mailto:nancy.rossland@ndsu.edu).

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