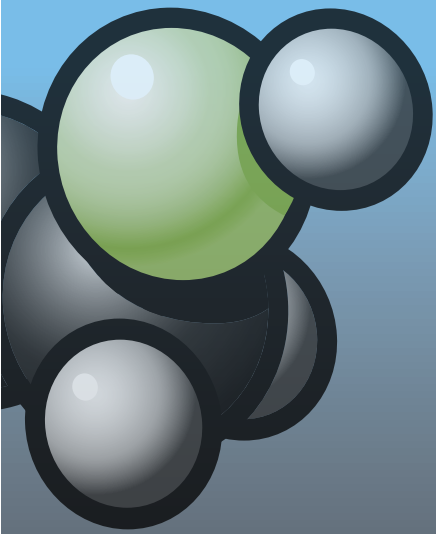




www.bestinc.org

Inspiring Future Generations of Engineers, Scientists, and Technology Experts Since 1993



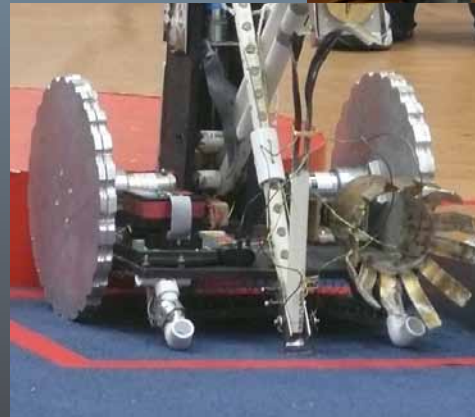
2009 ANNUAL REPORT

National Headquarters
at AUBURN UNIVERSITY
AUBURN, ALABAMA



Mission Statement

BEST is a non-profit, volunteer-based organization whose mission is to inspire students to pursue careers in engineering, science, technology, and math through participation in a sports-like, science- and engineering-based robotics competition.



Our Principles

- Students are the primary participants and benefactors. BEST is an extracurricular academic experience that engages students through teamwork, self-directed learning, apprenticeship, and problem solving. Students perform all of the work. Team mentors—engineers, technical professionals and scientists from industry—serve as guides to shepherd students through the engineering design process.
- Schools participate at no cost. There are no entry fees or kit costs associated with the BEST competition. Schools must fund their travel costs, team tee shirts, and other team enhancements.
- BEST is an equal opportunity program. Any public, private, or home school may participate in BEST

President's Letter

Wow, what another great year for BEST! In 2009, BEST touched more than 11,500 students from 14 states. Since its start in 1993, BEST has impacted the lives of 91,000-plus students!

Growing BEST has required an enormous amount of time, energy, and passion from countless volunteers. This phenomenal program continues to evolve, both technologically and organizationally.

On the technology side, our game this year, “High Octane,” pushed our students to even greater heights with the introduction of an IR transmitter and real-time field interaction. Future games will definitely exploit these capabilities, especially in the realm of programming. And with the addition of sensors, the fun is just beginning as we expand the versatility of the BEST returnable kit.

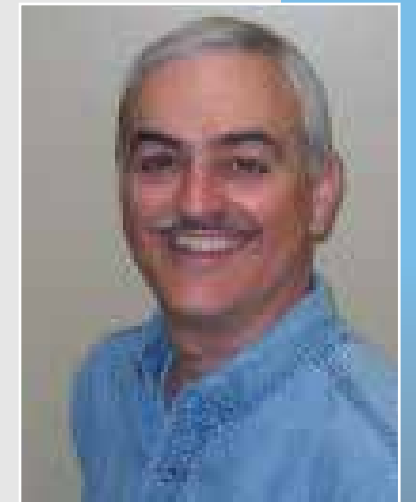
On the organization side, the hire of Dr. George Blanks, Director of K-12 Engineering Outreach in the Ginn College of Engineering at Auburn University (national headquarters of BEST), as our part-time Executive Director (ED) along with Ms. Rachel Dossman, an independent contractor serving in an administrative and research role, has proven to be an excellent move. The need for consistent and purposeful strategic planning, growth, STEM education partnerships/alliances, and national fund raising are major issues that face our grassroots organization. These are the tasks that many of us simply don't do. We strongly believe George and Rachel, along with the help of our Board of Directors and BEST family, will help ensure we're strategically focused on those things that are most important to our students' futures.

In addition, Auburn University hosted our first National Conference last June. Many BEST teachers, mentors, and program volunteers took advantage of the workshops, sessions, and forums to network with the BEST family, share their stories, present their ideas, and learn more about how to be a successful organization. The conference also provided teachers with training in the BEST technology and BEST Award categories. Our hope is to continue the National Conference every other year and move it around to different host sites.

I truly believe the greatest strengths of our BEST family are its dedicated volunteers and sponsors. We know that they stay involved because of our unwavering commitment to the students. As we continue to grow and position ourselves for the future, we cannot forget the basic principles our organization was built upon – student-designed, student-built, student-driven robots at a cost that allows any school to participate. And please remember that BEST exists to inspire those students to be tomorrow's technicians, engineers, scientists, scholars, and inventors.

So join me in 2010 as together we promote the BEST game in town!

John Martini
President, BEST Board of Directors



Executive Director's Letter

These are exciting times for BEST as our program enters its 18th year of providing middle and high school students with an exciting and fun program that provides them with opportunities to help develop their potential.

In my tenure as BEST's Executive Director, I have seen our "stock" rising on a greater national scale. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education has moved to the forefront as the single, most critical area of education that the U.S. must develop in order for our country to remain competitive in an increasingly global economy. Many state and federal government initiatives are being launched to attract students to careers in these fields. BEST is being recognized as an ideal program for helping this cause.

I am entering my tenth year of being a part of BEST, both as a hub director and as a member of its core group of leaders and organizers. I have seen it grow from 18 hubs in 2001 to 39 this coming fall. We have impacted the lives of thousands of students during this time and that number continues to grow each year. And to think that we have accomplished this through the devotion of thousands of volunteers. They share a passion for the program and devote hundreds of hours outside of their jobs in helping to provide this program for schools and students in their communities.

Special recognition is due the hub directors who not only organize and run their competitions, but also raise their own funding. There literally would be no BEST were it not for these remarkable individuals.

The information and data contained in this report may not appear to be either exceptional or extraordinary. However, if the reader would consider what we have accomplished without a full-time staff, with very limited funding, and through the tireless efforts of over 4,000 volunteers, it should be apparent that BEST is a phenomenal organization.

I am privileged to represent BEST Robotics in our efforts to expand the program across the U.S. and increase its impact on students, K-12 STEM education, and workforce development.



George Blanks, Ed.D.
Executive Director, BEST Robotics, Inc.
National Headquarters, Auburn University



Boosting Engineering, Science & Technology™

Why do we do our BEST?

Why do we do this? Why do teachers, team mentors, and over 4000 BEST volunteers devote countless hours of their personal time to this program? What is it about BEST that is worth all this effort?

One answer can be seen in a small piece of the event that often goes unnoticed. In this tiny slice of time, a student's actions become a microcosm of the entire reason for BEST. It happens only in the frantic few minutes before a round of competition starts. Those final few seconds when all eyes are on them, the crowd noise is deafening, and the time pressure is mounting. It happens when that student makes the sudden realization that their robot is not working.

What happens then reflects everything that student has learned in BEST. In that pressure cooker environment, young students walk through a cognitive detective process worthy of any NASA mission controller. Without their adult mentors to help, under time pressure and under emotional strain, they encounter a remarkable 60-second life lesson.

Most push through. They do it because in the preceding six weeks of design, test, and redesign, they have learned a skill. BEST has taught them how to break the problem barrier—the realization that a problem is not an endpoint, but only an answer not yet found. Life is a set of problems to be encountered. Once the problem barrier is broken, problems are replaced with process.

BEST changes mindsets. BEST places students in a situation that conditions their minds. It is a situation that flows from concept, to physical structure, and finally to operational use. Using robot design and competition, BEST presents an opportunity for students to break the problem barrier.



Steve Marum and Ted Mahler
Co-Founders



BEST appears first as an almost insurmountable problem and ends with the accomplishment of a solution; in the middle, a process. That process is the key. Somewhere in that process, the perception of a problem is changed, and with it young minds are changed, as well.

Our workforce, our country, and our world need these changed young minds that understand problems are not endpoints, but undiscovered answers waiting for the correct process.

That's why we do this. That's why we continue to do our BEST.

Program Overview

- BEST originated in 1993 when Ted Mahler and Steve Marum, two engineers with Texas Instruments in Sherman, TX, started the program as a competition for rural schools in the area. The first competition was held with 14 schools and 221 students. In fall 2008, over 650 schools and 10,000 students participated.
- BEST has been a 501(c)3, non-profit organization since 1998 and is headquartered in the Ginn College of Engineering at Auburn University (AL).
- BEST is a volunteer-driven organization, with over 4,000 people serving as “hub” (local competition site) organizers, event personnel, team mentors, and competition judges.
- BEST licenses use of its program to groups that want to start the program in their communities. Any group—companies, school systems, two- or four-year colleges or universities, professional engineering societies, or individuals—can start a hub. Funding for a hub must be raised by the local organizing group.

Competition Overview

- The competition itself is comprised of two divisions, **Robotics** and the BEST Award. All teams compete in the Robotics division. The **BEST Award** competition is optional for participating schools.
- Robotics - Each team designs and builds a radio-controlled machine to accomplish defined tasks in a game-type format. Six weeks before the competition, the teams gather for Kick Off Day in early September at local hub sites where they receive identical kits of equipment (motors, r/c unit, batteries, etc.) and raw materials from which to build their machines, and a detailed set of game rules. The machines they build cannot weigh more than 24 pounds, must fit within a 24-inch cube, and must be built only from the raw materials supplied to them by the local hub.
- BEST Award teams are judged on the following: Project Engineering Notebook; Oral Presentation; Educational Display; Judges Interview; Spirit and Sportsmanship; and Robot Performance. Winning the BEST Award is considered the highest achievement any team in the competition can accomplish.



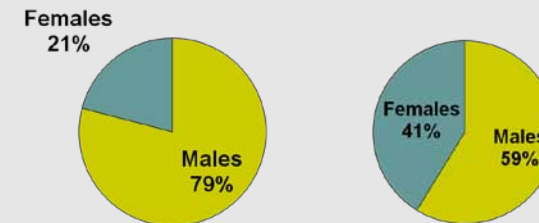
2009 Demographics

Size of BEST

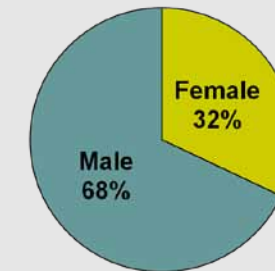
601 schools and 11,500-plus students participated
(19 students avg. per team)

Gender, based on participation

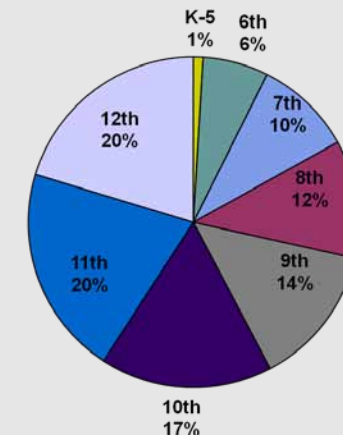
Robot Construction Team BEST Award Team



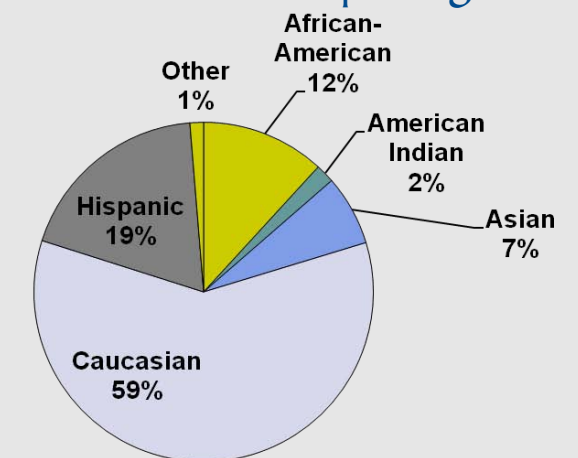
Gender, all participants



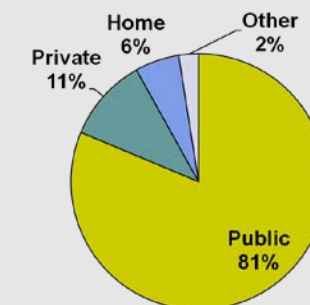
Student grade level



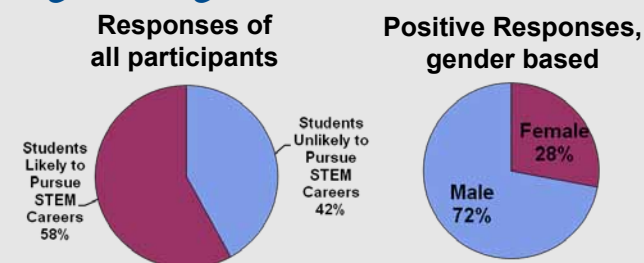
Race, 32 hubs reporting



Type of School



Likely to pursue science, technology, engineering, or math career



Mentors

2234 volunteers served as team mentors
(4 mentors avg. per team)



2009 Competition Sites (“Hubs”)

BEST licenses use of its program to organizations, corporations, groups of individuals, and both two-year and four-year institutions that wish to start and sustain a “hub” (local competition site). In 2009 BEST had 35 hubs operating in 13 states.



Regional Championships

Frontier Trails Championship
University of Arkansas - Fort Smith
Fort Smith, Arkansas

South's BEST Championship
Auburn University
Auburn, AL

Texas BEST Championship
University of North Texas
Denton, TX

Bison BEST
North Dakota State University
Fargo, North Dakota

Blazer BEST
University of Alabama
Birmingham
Birmingham, AL

Brazos BEST
College Station, Texas

Bulldog BEST
Mississippi State University
Starkville, Mississippi

Capitol BEST
Austin, Texas

Coastal Bend BEST
Texas A&M University - Kingsville
Kingsville, Texas

Collin County BEST
McKinney, Texas

Connecticut BEST
Central Connecticut State University
New Britain, Connecticut

Cowtown BEST
Lockheed Martin Aeronautics
Fort Worth, Texas

Crowley's Ridge BEST
Arkansas State University
Jonesboro, Arkansas

Dallas BEST
Dallas, Texas

Denton County BEST
University of North Texas
Denton, Texas

Emerald Coast BEST
University of West Florida
Pensacola, Florida

Galveston BEST
University of Texas Medical Branch Galveston
Galveston, Texas

Georgia BEST
Southern Polytechnic State University
Marietta, Georgia

Heartland BEST
Northwestern Oklahoma State University
Alva, Oklahoma

Hot Springs BEST
Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts
Hot Springs, Arkansas

Jubilee BEST
Mobile, Alabama

Kansas BEST
Wichita State University
Wichita, Kansas

Little Rock BEST
University of Arkansas Little Rock
Little Rock, Arkansas

Music City BEST
Lipscomb University
Nashville, Tennessee

New Mexico BEST
New Mexico State University at Las Cruces
Las Cruces, New Mexico

North Alabama BEST
Wallace State Community College
Hanceville, Alabama

North Houston BEST
Baker Hughes, Inc.
North Houston, Texas

North Texas BEST
Sherman, Texas

Northark BEST
North Arkansas College
Harrison, AR

Oklahoma BEST
Oklahoma Christian University
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Philadelphia BEST
School District of Philadelphia
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

River Valley BEST
University of Arkansas - Fort Smith
Fort Smith, Arkansas

San Antonio BEST
San Antonio, Texas

Space City BEST
Metro Houston, Texas

Tennessee Valley BEST
Calhoun Community College
Decatur, Alabama

War Eagle BEST
Auburn University
Auburn, Alabama

West Texas BEST
Texas Tech University
Lubbock, Texas

National Sponsors



igus, Inc. manufactures industry-leading plastic components for use on automated machinery. The company became our first national sponsor in 2006, donating various plastic machinery components to each BEST team each season. The company's generous donation of products enables the BEST experience to be more complex and challenging for the students.
www.igus.com/yesprogram



SolidWorks is one of the leading CAD software companies in the world and has been generously providing free software to every BEST team during the annual competition since 2006. As a result of our teams now having extensive experience with SolidWorks, BEST has introduced a CAD Design Award and incorporated CAD design into its Project Engineering Notebook competition component.
www.solidworks.com



Alibre Inc., founded in 1997 and based in Richardson, Texas, became a national sponsor in 2008. Alibre provides BEST students with free “lifetime” CAD design software that can be downloaded to their home, laptop, and classroom computers.
www.alibre.com

2009 Hub and Regional Sponsors

- Each BEST hub and regional must raise its own funds to run its competition through sponsorships.
- Sponsorship funds are used to purchase equipment and materials BEST teams use to construct and power their robots.
- Donations, whether in the form of cash or in-kind support, are tax-deductible.
- Sponsor recognition at BEST competitions varies based upon the amount of the gift.

HUB	SPONSORS
Bison BEST	North Dakota State University – College of Engineering & Architecture North Dakota Department of Career and Technical Education Case New Holland Gabriel Metal Casting Greater Fargo-Moorhead Economic Development Corporation BTD Manufacturing Bobcat FRS Industries Fargo Automation Phoenix International North Dakota State University Development Foundation Massman Automation Designs Central Boiler Northern Pipe Products Vareberg Engineering State Bank and Trust Sure Sign Goodrich Brokerage Printing West Acres Shopping Center
Blazer BEST	UAB School of Engineering Valmont-Newmark Lowe's Birmingham Chapter American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) Birmingham Chapter IEEE Birmingham Chapter Instrumentation Society of America (ISA) John Gunter Penny Manuel
Brazos BEST	Capsher Technology Knowledge Based Systems, Inc. (KBSI) Dynacon Inc. Hydraulic Works Inc. Lynntech, Inc. Brazos Industries Inc. LGL Animal Care Products City Bank Texas Machine Works Inc. Agnitek
Bulldog BEST	Mississippi State University, Bagley College of Engineering
Capitol BEST	Intel Corporation Central Texas Technology & Engineering Executive Council Dell Computer Global Knowledge, Inc. Westlake High School Anderson High School Roger Beasley Volvo Tony Cacciola & Family Kurt Shultz Photography ANVANA Web Hosting

Collin County BEST	Raytheon The Ackerman Family
Connecticut BEST	Central Connecticut State University United Technologies Corp. Lowe's of Newington
Cowtown BEST	No Sponsors Reported
Crowley's Ridge BEST	No Sponsors Reported
Dallas BEST	Texas Instruments High Performance Analog Texas Instruments Mixed Signal Automotive Texas Instruments Digital Light Processor Texas Instruments Wireless Terminal Business Unit Texas Instruments Power Management Raytheon Photronics The T-System UTD Engineering
Denton County BEST	UNT College of Engineering McClendon Corporation Hayes, Berry, White & Vanzant, L.L.P. Nucon Steel Corporation Sam Pack's Ford Country of Lewisville Coppell High School Booster Club Bill Stamm Mike Danner Long Horn Supply, Denton, TX Winners' Choice Awards, Lewisville, TX Vernon H. S. Student Activity Fund Dr. Oscar Garcia Diana Hatch Dr. & Mrs. Nieswiadomy John T. Hickman John Shelton Tim Shoopman Debra & Thomas Babb Billy Cope & Susan Seaborn
Emerald Coast BEST	University of West Fl. Foundation Gulf Power Co. AT&T University of West Florida UWF Alumni Association Armstrong World Industries Institute for Human and Machine Cognition Webb Electric of Florida Bit-Wizards IT Solutions Inc.
Galveston BEST	No Sponsors Reported
Georgia BEST	Siemens Energy and Automation Higginbotham and Associates

Golden Lions BEST	No Sponsors Reported
Heartland BEST	No Sponsors Reported
Jubilee BEST	The Forum Mobile County Commissioner Mike Dean Alabama Power Foundation J.L. Bedsole Foundation Evonik Degussa Corporation Aztec Maritime Services, Inc. Gulf Coast Exploreum Science Center Ciba - Part of the BASF Group Technip Corporation Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding Hargrove and Associates Airbus North America Engineering Chevron ExxonMobil Dorsett Productions System Scale Corporation U.S. Coast Guard Davidson High School EPIC Program Faulkner State Community College BakerBytes
Kansas BEST	The Boeing Company Cessna Aircraft Company Spirit AeroSystems Great Plains Ventures, Inc. igus Solid Works Alibre AIAA - Wichita Section WSU College of Engineering
Little Rock BEST	No Sponsors Reported
Music City BEST	No Sponsors Reported
New Mexico BEST	No Sponsors Reported
North Alabama BEST	No Sponsors Reported
North Houston BEST	Baker Hughes Inc. Chevron Phillips FMC Technologies GJ Snyder Hydraulic Component Services Lone Star College System
Northark BEST	North Arkansas College Mountain Home Science and Technology Group North Arkansas College Foundation Ed and Lisa Proctor Fashion Center Mall Flexsteel Industries Wood Products Division Home Depot Harrison AR Johnson Manufacturing Co. Lowe's Hollister Mo. John and Scherry Levy

North Texas BEST	Roger and Tommie Hall ADC Manufacturing IEEE Ozark Chapter Texas Instruments Midway Mall Lowe's DayCom Solutions
Oklahoma BEST	Conoco Phillips Lyle Harms Oklahoma Christian University Lowe's Mazzio's Pizza OG&E Tinker Airforce Base
Philadelphia BEST	College, Career & Technical Education Division-SDOP Villanova University's College of Engineering NASA's Pennsylvania Space Grant Consortium U.S. Navy League IBM igus SolidWorks National Society of Black Engineers Society of Manufacturing Engineers
River Valley BEST	University of Arkansas - Fort Smith ABF U-Pack Business Development Control Technologies, Inc. Custom Awards and Engraving Lowe's of Fort Smith Lumber One Peterson Chemicals, Inc. Shamrock Bolt & Screw Spray-Rite, Inc. Weldon, Williams & Lick Baldor Electric Company Central Mall - Fort Smith Charlotte Pipe & Foundary Davis Iron & Metal, Inc. J&B Supply Company Whirlpool Corporation Williams-Crawford & Associates Champion Cycling Academy Sports Butler & Cook, Inc. Fort Smith Athletic Club PPG Architectural Finishes, Inc
San Antonio BEST	St Mary's University Cogburn Family Foundation NuStar Energy Foundation Southwest Research Institute Cutshall Consulting, LLC IBC Bank McCombs Foundation Security Service Federal Credit Union Society of American Military Engineers, San Antonio Branch DRB Aviation Consultants Frost Bank Zachry Holdings, Inc. David Kolodrubetz and Ellen Kraig C. H. Guenther & Son, Inc Tom & Susanne O'Brien
Space City BEST	Jacobs Engineering NASA Johnson Space Center

Tennessee Valley BEST Toyota
 Jacobs Engineering, Inc.
 Rotary Club of Decatur Daybreak

War Eagle BEST Alabama Power Company
 Alabama Power Generations and Marketing
 Vice President for Outreach, Auburn University
 Auburn-Opelika Tourism Bureau
 CAD Academy
 DEPCO
 Rheem Manufacturing
 Technical Training Aids
 Toyota Motor Manufacturing
 VWR International
 Brasfield & Gorrie Construction
 First Year Program, School of Architecture, Auburn University
 Honda Motor Manufacturing
 George Blanks, Ginn College of Engineering, Auburn University
 GEARS Educational Systems
 GKN Aerospace
 Hoar Construction
 Instrumentation Society of America, Birmingham Chapter
 Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) Institute,
 Auburn University
 Briggs & Stratton Foundation
 Donaldson Foundation
 Hyundai Motor Manufacturing of Alabama
 Neptune Technology Group
 Southern Company
 Southern Nuclear Company
 Wiregrass Foundation

West Texas BEST XFab Semiconductor Foundries
 Texas Tech University Whitacre College of Engineering
 Texas Society of Professional Engineers
 IEEE

REGIONAL SPONSORS COMPETITIONS



Frontier Trails BEST The City of Fort Smith, Arkansas
 University of Arkansas - Fort Smith



South's BEST Alabama Power Company
 Alabama Power Generations and Marketing
 Vice President for Outreach, Auburn University
 Auburn-Opelika Tourism Bureau
 CAD Academy
 DEPCO
 Rheem Manufacturing
 Technical Training Aids
 Toyota Motor Manufacturing
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 Donaldson Foundation
 Hyundai Motor Manufacturing of Alabama
 Neptune Technology Group
 Southern Company
 Southern Nuclear Company
 Wiregrass Foundation



Texas BEST Texas Instruments
 Raytheon
 Lockheed Martin
 University of North Texas
 UNT President's Council
 UNT College of Engineering
 Denton Convention and Visitors Bureau
 UNT Enrollment Management

Financial Report

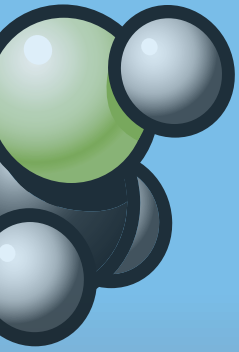
- BEST Robotics, Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization registered with the state of Texas.
- Each hub is financially independent, responsible for generating its own funding to cover the costs of its competition. They either form their own non-profit or operate as part of an educational institution.
- Hubs pay an annual licensing fee to BRI to use of the annual game materials.

Statement of Activities Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2009	
Revenues	
Hub Contributions	\$75,819
Reimbursement of Material Purchases	\$12,317
Total Revenues	\$88,136
Operating Expenses	
Management and General Material Purchases	\$ 45,109
Operating (Loss) Gain	\$43,027

	December 31, 2009	December 31, 2008	Change
Assets			
Cash and Equivalent	\$153,831.84	\$113,389.50	\$40,442.34
Total Assets	\$153,831.84	\$113,389.50	\$40,442.34
Liabilities and Equity			
Payroll Liabilities	-\$7,178.76	-\$7,178.76	\$0.00
Total Current Liabilities	-\$7,178.76	-\$7,178.76	\$0.00
Equity			
Opening Balance Equity	\$23,015.39	\$23,015.39	\$0.00
Retained Earnings	\$97,552.87	\$83,459.83	\$14,093.04
Net Income	\$40,442.34	\$14,093.04	\$26,349.30
Total Equity	\$161,010.60	\$120,568.26	\$40,442.34
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$153,831.84	\$113,389.50	\$40,442.34



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