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BEST Robotics Competition Powers Up with the VEX Robotics Control System

*Powerful new VEXnet control system enhances capabilities
and fuels growth of robotics competition*

Auburn, Alabama – June 30, 2010 – BEST (“*Boosting Engineering, Science and Technology*”) Robotics, Inc., a non-profit robotics competition with national headquarters at Auburn University, has announced a multi-year partnership with VEX Robotics, Inc. BEST will adopt the company’s powerful new wireless VEXnet control system, which includes the VEX Cortex microcontroller, VEXnet joystick and compatible programming software. BEST will continue to utilize the company sponsored RobotEvents.com web portal to promote competition events and handle online team registration.

"Integrating the state-of-the-art VEXnet control system into our competition will allow BEST students across the U.S. to expand their technological skills, which will increase their interest in pursuing high-tech, well-paying careers in engineering, science, and technology," said Dr. George Blanks, Executive Director of BEST and Director of K-12 Outreach in the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering at Auburn University. "The VEX control system and event registration portal lift a burden off of our all-volunteer organization. The partnership allows us to focus our resources on growing the competition across the U.S. to better serve the needs of students, schools, and industry."

VEX Robotics also brings its robot programming software partners into the agreement. Intelitek, developer of easyC, and The Robotics Academy at Carnegie Mellon University, developer of ROBOTC, will donate licenses of their software to every BEST team.

BEST is an equal opportunity program in which any public, private, or home school may participate with no entry fees or kit costs. Schools are only required to fund their travel costs, team tee shirts, and other team enhancements. The partnership with VEX Robotics, Inc. a subsidiary of Innovation First International, allows BEST teams and hubs to sell the parent company’s popular HEXBUG Micro Robotic Creatures for fundraising at a profit to offset these incidental expenses.

“VEX Robotics is very proud to support the growth of the BEST Robotics Competition. This is in line with our objectives and clearly establishes VEX as the dominant platform supplier for educational robotics in both the classroom and after-school competitions across multiple academic disciplines,” said Paul Copioli, president of VEX Robotics, Inc. “VEX allows BEST to continually offer the latest in educational robotics technology while encouraging the current installed base of VEX schools to begin participating in the unique BEST competition.”

About BEST Robotics, Inc.

BEST Robotics is a non-profit, volunteer-based organization whose mission is to engage, excite, and inspire middle and high school students to pursue science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) careers through participation in a sports-like robotics competition. Started in 1993 as a competition for 14 area schools in rural Sherman, Texas, BEST has become the largest school-based robotics competition in the U.S.—and the only one free to schools—with over 850 schools, 12,000 students, and 4000 volunteers participating at 41 licensed competition sites in 15 states. BEST licenses its program to organizations, colleges and universities, or groups of individuals.

The program recently held its first ever national championship in conjunction with the VEX Robotics World Championship held at the Dallas Convention Center in April 2010. For more information about BEST Robotics, visit <http://best.eng.auburn.edu> or RobotEvents.com.

About VEX Robotics, Inc. and Innovation First International:

[VEX Robotics, Inc.](http://VEXRobotics.com) is a subsidiary of Innovation First International, a privately held corporation, which was founded on the belief that innovation very early in the design process is necessary to produce simple and elegant product designs. Innovation First International began producing electronics for unmanned mobile ground robots and is now an industry leader in the hobby, competition, education and toy markets.

The company’s three major subsidiaries, VEX Robotics, Inc., Innovation First Labs, Inc. (makers of HEXBUG Micro Robotic Creatures), and RackSolutions, Inc. span the education, consumer and business-to-business markets. The company has over 250 man years of experience supporting educational robotics programs and extensive engineering resources on two continents dedicated to the VEX Robotics platform.

Leveraging the company’s core competency in electrical and mechanical engineering, the RackSolutions division works closely with all major computer OEMs to provide custom mounting solutions and industry-wide rack compatibility for data installations of all sizes.

In the 2009 the company added offices in Hong Kong, China and the United Kingdom to better serve the global marketplace. With an advanced in-house metal fabrication plant, distribution center and corporate office located together in a 13-acre complex in Greenville, Texas, the company is poised to continue on a rapid growth path. Please visit www.innovationfirst.com for additional information.