



NEWS RELEASE: Teams Visit Ferris State for Rube Goldberg High School Nationals

Anne Hogenson to: Archive

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Included below is a press release regarding the Rube Goldberg Machine Contest High School National Competition at Ferris State University's Wink Arena in Big Rapids, MI. The event will take place Saturday, March 19, 2011. Related questions may be directed to Anne Hogenson, Communications Specialist, University Advancement and Marketing.

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Teams Visit Ferris State for Rube Goldberg High School Nationals

BIG RAPIDS, Mich. – High school teams from across the United States will bring their Rube Goldberg machines to Ferris State University's Wink Arena on Saturday, March 19 for the high school national competition of the annual contest.

High school teams from California, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Nebraska, New York, Texas and Wisconsin, all winners of their respective regional competitions, will present complex machines that perform the simple task of the 2011 challenge – watering a plant. They will be joined by Michigan's own first-round winners from Rockford High School, whose machine entry "Welcome to the Jurassic Jungle" took Wink Arena by storm in the Feb. 12 regionals.

Rockford coach Ryan Whitmore explained that his team's regional win was a real race to the finish. "For us, it really came together last minute. We only had two or three successful runs before the competition," he said. The team's fortunes improved with seven flawless operations of its machine in the first round. "Jurassic Jungle" reuses everyday items like fishing line, a

mousetrap, a bucket and an action figure toy to complete its task – and to trigger a radio to play the group’s theme song during the run.

The New Auburn High School team of Wisconsin, which won the national title in 2005 and 2006, will bring a machine that uses a catapult, a baseball bat, a toy tank and a squirt gun. Also in contention is Maine South High School, one of two Illinois teams to win the right to compete in the national competition. Maine South has dominated in Argonne National Laboratory’s regional contest in 1996, 1999, 2007 and 2010. Traveling the furthest will be the Aliso Niguel High School team, which hails from Aliso Viejo, Calif. The Aliso Niguel team’s machine uses a chain reaction of toy ball collisions.

The Rube Goldberg Machine Contest, in which science clubs assemble overly elaborate machines to perform daily tasks, began at Purdue University in the 1940s. Based on the cartoons of Pulitzer Prize-winning designer, writer and artist Rube Goldberg, the competition rewards the most complex and creative machine to run successfully without human intervention. Ferris’ College of Engineering Technology teams regularly proceed to the annual collegiate national competition at Purdue University, as well. Ferris’ 2007 team won the national prize, and its 2010 team won a Guinness World Record title for the world’s largest functional machine.

Tom Hollen, chairperson of the regional and national high school events, is also the Ferris team’s coach for the college competition. He explained that he values the confidence that Rube Goldberg contest participation inspires in local students at the high school and college levels. “My favorite part of the contest is success and recognition for local students,” he said. “Even

though our schools may be smaller, students' education is so good that they can compete at a national level.”

“The Rube Goldberg competition is a wonderful opportunity for students and teachers to collaborate on problem-based learning,” added Ferris President David L. Eisler. “We’ve watched this program grow at FSU and received great recognition for it. It’s wonderful to host [the high school event] on campus.”

The competition portion of the Saturday event begins at 10 a.m. and is open to the public at no charge. For more information, visit www.ferris.edu/rube.

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