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Career Tech Engineering Academy Team Medals at National Robotics Challenge

Honda Innovation Award nomination another highlight

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. – This spring, a busload of Career Tech Engineering Academy students and instructors were Ohio-bound for the ultimate robotics competition. The Northwest Education Services (North Ed) Career Tech program sent its students to compete among 486 robots in 13 competitions with 1,300 participants from 27 middle schools, 40 high schools and 16 colleges and universities.

Started in 1986, the annual National Robotics Challenge (NRC) is the longest running competition of its kind. Students from Career Tech Engineering Academy have been participating since 2000, before the NRC found its current venue in Marion, Ohio, where the robotics contest has been held now for 20 years.

This year, one Engineering Academy team earned a bronze medal in the sumo robot category of the competition. The third place team, Gears of Glory, was made up of students Emmett Jaquish (Benzie Central), Evan Chandler (Benzie Central) and Logan DeFour (Leland). Teams participating in the sumo robot contest were to design and build a self-propelled, autonomous robot that forces another sumo robot outside a competition ring. In this short video, the bronze award-winning sumo robot makes a comeback in one of its matches at the event.

"Our kids quickly learn that in engineering and industry, perseverance and grit are key," said Career Tech instructor Michael George. "I'm really proud of our Engineering Academy students' persistence in building effective and competitive robots. Our teams encountered electrical, mechanical and programming hurdles that they had to troubleshoot. It's not easy to compete at this level and it's refreshing to watch them support one another and learn from the experience."

Additional Engineering Academy students entered robots in various NRC events, including a rescue robot team, The Fidgets, which finished fifth out of 27 in the field. Members of The Fidgets are Preston Breitmeyer (homeschool/Buckley), Kai Collins (Mancelona), Owen Lawson (Traverse City Central) and Nicole Watt (TC Central). There were also teams that competed in

the autonomous vehicle challenge and robo hockey, along with the micromouse category, which included nine teams made up of Engineering Academy juniors.

Leading into the April 18-20 event, Engineering Academy students spent the entire semester planning and building robots to compete against peers. Sponsored by Honda, the annual competition aims to expand the talents of students in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).
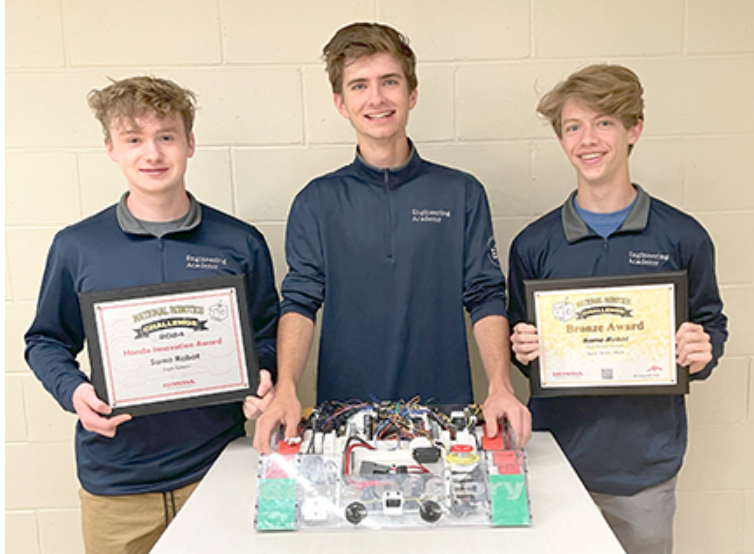
The Honda Innovation Award is one of the highlights of the event and Engineering Academy's bronze medal-winning team, Gears of Glory, was also nominated and interviewed for this prestigious honor.

Engineering Academy is an award-winning program for high school juniors and seniors at North Ed Career Tech that integrates courses in engineering, English, mathematics and science around the themes of robotics and manufacturing. Engineering Academy is currently accepting applications from current high school sophomores for admission beginning in the 2024-25 school year.
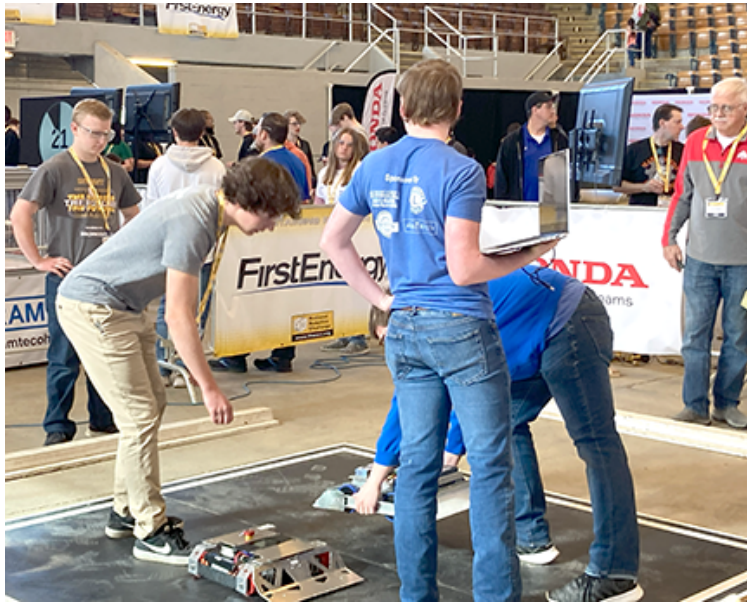
North Ed Career Tech offers more than 20 programs to high school juniors and seniors from Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska and Leelanau counties. Students are educated in career and technical fields, offering hands-on practical experiences, job shadowing, career exploration and early college opportunities, along with rigorous academic integration. For more information about North Ed Career Tech, click here.

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Photos, video below

Career Tech Engineering Academy's sumo bot team, Gears of Glory, is made up of, from left, Emmett Jaquish (Benzie Central), Evan Chandler (Benzie Central) and Logan DeFour (Leland). The team is pictured above with its bronze award, their Honda Innovation Award nomination and the third place-winning sumo robot. Teams participating in the sumo robot contest were to design and build a self-propelled, autonomous robot that forces another sumo robot outside a competition ring.

Career Tech Engineering Academy's sumo robot team, Gears of Glory, prepares for competition at National Robotics Challenge in Marion, OH. In this short video, the bronze award-winning sumo robot makes a comeback in one of its matches at National Robotics Challenge in Marion, Ohio.

Career Tech Engineering Academy's rescue robot team, The Fidgets, is made up of, from second left, Nicole Watt (TC Central), Kai Collins (Mancelona), Owen Lawson (TC Central) and Preston Breitmeyer (homeschool/Buckley). The team is pictured above with instructor Michael George and finished fifth out of 27 in the field.