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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Local Students Use Science and Technology to Transform Transportation

Teams solve real-world problems through robot design and research at FIRST® LEGO® League

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. – On Saturday, December 12, the Rahall Transportation Institute (RTI) will host the regional FIRST® LEGO® League (FLL) “Smart Move” Challenge, at the Morrow Library on the Marshall University campus. The event begins at 10:00 a.m. and is free and open to the public.

Nearly 200 students from Cabell, Wayne, and Mason counties are participating in FLL, an international robotics program that ignites an enthusiasm for discovery, science, and technology in students ages 5 to 14. Using LEGO MINDSTORMS® technologies and LEGO materials while working with mentors, students spend eight weeks learning engineering and computer programming principles as they design and build a fully autonomous robot capable of performing specific tasks. The program is sponsored by RTI and the NASA West Virginia Space Grant Consortium.

“This is a fun way to introduce younger students to science, technology, engineering and mathematics – or STEM,” Linda Hamilton, LEGO® Program Coordinator at RTI, said. “It’s exciting to follow them through the discovery process.”

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At the event students will demonstrate the problem-solving, creative thinking, teamwork and sportsmanship skills they have developed during the program. This year's competition, "Transforming Transportation," calls for teams to research and present their own creative solutions for accessing people, places, goods and services in the safest, most efficient way possible.

"At RTI we encourage innovation, communication, and collaboration in transportation through research and applied science," Bob Plymale, RTI Director and CEO, said. "This challenge applies those same ideals and gives our young people the opportunity to tackle situations they will face as adults."

The FLL competition is judged in four areas: project presentation; robot performance; technical design and programming of the robot; and teamwork. The highest honor will go to the team that best exemplifies the spirit and values of the FLL program. Select teams will also have the opportunity to participate at the *FIRST* LEGO League World Festival, which takes place in conjunction with the *FIRST* Championship, April 15-17, 2010, at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta, Georgia.

To learn more about *FIRST*, go to www.usfirst.org. To learn more about the "Smart Move" Challenge, go to www.FIRSTLEGOLeague.org.

Headquartered in Huntington, RTI works to improve intermodal transportation through research, technology, education and workforce development. RTI continuously fosters innovation and collaboration to create efficient and safe transportation systems and enhance economic development.

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