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**‘FIRST’ Robotics launches kick-off for international competition**

by: [Tamara Starr](https://www.news10.com/author/tamara-starr-2/)

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TROY, N.Y. ([NEWS10](https://www.news10.com/community/restaurant-rundown/new-restaurant-moving-into-cohoes-van-schaick-country-club/)) — The 2023 season of the Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology Robotics Competition (FIRST) will come to Albany from March 29th through April 1st. RPI hosted the local kick-off event, where 14 high schools from the area will be competing.

Paul Schoch is an electrical engineering professor at RPI and was happy to be a part of the first in-person kick-off after having remote gatherings for the last few years.

“It’s not the same when you can get together like this. Get the kid the parts,” he said. “Brainstorming is going to happen afterward.”

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Darrel Ackroyd is a nanotechnology teacher at Ballston Spa, and he says that his students can never predict what kind of challenge will be presented.

“It’s always a big surprise. The reveal is so exciting to see. Like, what is our challenge going to be for the next three months of strategizing and trying to figure out how we are going to build this robot from scratch,” he said. “And how we are going to compete at the competition.”

The challenge was presented this afternoon, and now students have the next few months to design, build, and test their robots.

Another focus of the competition will be to use sustainable energy while working with the robot kits provided. But each kit won’t have everything, so each team will need to be creative with its design.