Qualification underway for world's largest rocket contest

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Middle and high school students around the country are making a push to qualify for the Team America Rocketry Challenge and earn an invitation to the final round of competition in May.

A total of 690 teams from 48 states and the District of Columbia have signed up for the fifth annual TARC, the world's largest rocket contest.

The teams must successfully launch their handmade model rockets and earn a qualifying score to make it to the finals, scheduled for May 19 at Great Meadow in The Plains, Va. This year students are shooting for an altitude of 850 feet and flight duration of 45 seconds while returning the raw-egg payload safely to the ground. Teams must make the successful launch by April 8 and turn in their paperwork by April 9. Finalists will be notified by April 13.

Scholarships and other prizes for the winning teams total more than $60,000.

For the second year in a row the Raytheon Company is adding an incredible extra incentive for the teams -- a trip to an international air show for the winners.

"Rewarding the TARC winners with a trip to the Paris Air Show in June 2007 continues our commitment to promoting math and science education among young people," Raytheon Executive Vice President for Business Development Thomas M. Culligan said. "We hope this will help motivate the winners and all the competitors to stick with science and math, and ultimately pursue a career in aerospace."

AIA and the National Association of Rocketry sponsor the competition with partners NASA, the Defense Department, the American Association of Physics Teachers, and 38 member companies.

The event is part of efforts to spur interest in aerospace careers among young people, which is important because the workforce in both industry and government is aging and a new generation of workers is needed as people leave in the coming years.

For more information visit http://www.rocketcontest.org/