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Huntington Robotics team sizzles at district competition

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The Huntington County 4-H Robotics Team THRUST 1501 celebrated a successful debut for the competitive season last weekend during the St. Joseph district event.

Lead business mentor Lori Elston stated the team was seeded fifth going into the competition. Following a day and a half of qualifying matches, the team was selected by an alliance seeded at the number two spot. Once the competition was completed, THRUST 1501 finished at the number two

position in their alliance, and fourth out of the 40 teams in the weekend competition.

The team is now sitting at third in the state out of 49 teams.

"It's especially impressive when our drive team, who operates the robot during competition, is made up of four first-year members. Our driver, Taylor Stettler, was a part of our shadow program last year but wasn't allowed to do anything with driving. It's not often to have a girl driver, and it's even less often to have a freshman on the drive team."

Elston noted the shadow program allows interested

eighth graders to join the team and take part in a variety of aspects aside from driving.

Along with their impressive placing, the team received a variety of awards.

"We had a student, Pujeeth Meruva, receive the Dean's List Award. In order to get the award, we have students submit letters to leadership, which acts like a resume. Each team selects two to be selected for the award. It's a good accomplishment for him," Elston said.

THRUST 1501 also received two peer awards from

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ROBOTICS COMPETITION: Members of Team THRUST 1501 in the pit area with their robot during the St. Joseph regional robotics competition: from left, Andrew Lund, Dane Brown (background), mentor Chris Elston, Darren Jackson and Nick Berlier.

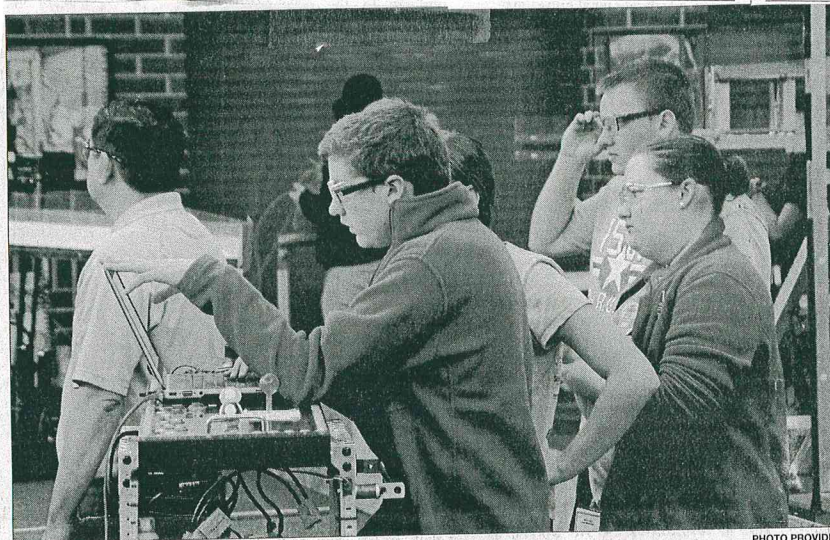


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DRIVE TEAM: The Team THRUST drive team focuses on the competition: from left, operator Dane Brown at the computer, driver Taylor Stettler (background), human player Jozie Ivey, technician Andrew Lund (background).

ROBOTICS

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fellow competitors Techno Trojans.

"We received the Gracious

Professionalism and Safety awards from them," Elston said. "Our safety group also received the Star of the Day from the safety judges for knowing and communicating a safety plan to all mem-

bers of our team."

The group will next compete in the Tippecanoe district event, held in Lafayette, on March 30. From there, the team has the possibility of advancing to state

competition in Kokomo on April 13 and 14. If the team performs well enough, they can advance to the worlds' competition, hosted in Detroit, on the last weekend of April.