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The Tech Museum of Innovation Announces Winning Teams for 20th Annual Tech Challenge

155 Bay Area Student Teams Participated in the Design of an Unmanned Mars Rover

SAN JOSE, Calif. – May 2, 2007 -- The Tech Museum of Innovation, one of the nation's premier science and technology museums, today announced the winners of its 20th anniversary *TECH CHALLENGE 2007*: *Mars Crater Mission*. This year's special anniversary Tech Challenge included 155 student teams, representing over 600 students, all competing in the design of an unmanned Mars rover. Participants came from communities around the Bay Area and as far as Monterey to the south and Elk Grove near Sacramento to the north.

Top awards for Best Overall Solution went to three teams each in the high school and middle school divisions. Best Overall Solution encompasses device performance, engineering process and style and presentation. The winning teams include:

9 to 12th Grade Best Overall Solution
- 1st Place, "Screeching Beagles," comprised of Keys School alumni, Palo Alto
- 2nd Place, "The TechShop Wrench Warriors," Los Altos High School, Los Altos
- 3rd Place, "Politically Incorrect," Monta Vista High School, Cupertino

6 to 8th Grade Best Overall Solution

> 1st Place, "Mars Bars," Castilleja School, Palo Alto
>
> 2nd Place "4G1B," St. John Vianney School, San Jose
>
> 3rd Place, "Crater Critters," Terman Middle School, Palo Alto

The Tech Challenge student team competition is known for attracting one of the best girl-to-boy ratios of any similar student competition. This year was no exception: almost half of the middle school aged participants and more than a third of the high school aged participants were girls. All of the first, second and third place winning teams for "Best Overall Solution" at the high school level were mixed teams, while at the middle school level, first and third place prize winners were all-girl teams. The second place middle school team was comprised of four girls and one boy.

Throughout its 20-year history, the Tech Challenge has strived to provide students with real life engineering design challenges to both inspire their creativity and build teamwork skills. All students operate in teams with a minimum of two participants and an adult advisor from their school, family or a local business. In this year's Mars Crater Mission, students had to design, build, and operate an unmanned device able to survive a 12-foot drop into a Martian crater, and then successfully exit the crater by ascending a 6-foot crater wall.

"We congratulate all the participants who helped us celebrate 20 years of this signature program of The Tech," said Peter Friess, The Tech's President. "What's most gratifying about this program is the enthusiasm of the students to work together and tackle a very challenging design problem. We know from the feedback of past participants that participation in Tech Challenge has spurred many youth to a career in engineering and other scientific endeavors. That's the goal – to help students unleash their creativity and gain confidence in their problem solving abilities."

Most Spectacular Failure and Other Awards

In the spirit of Tech Challenge to foster problem solving and learn through failure, another key award is the "Most Spectacular Failure," which was sponsored this year by MAKE Magazine. It is the goal of this award to remind students that failure is an important part of the innovation process, and that the greatest failures can lead to the greatest successes. Teams achieving "Most Spectacular Failure" in the 9 to 12th grade category went to "The H Squad," Cupertino High School, Cupertino; and in the 6 to 8th grade category "Team 01," Third Street Community Center, San Jose.

Other award categories included: Peer Award for Best Team Name, Teamwork Award, and a series of Judge's Choice and Inspirational Awards presented to teams who excelled in distinctive ways. All other award winners are listed on the Tech Challenge web site at http://techchallenge.thetech.org/.

Tech Challenge Sponsors
Brocade and Cadence Design Systems were the lead sponsors of this year's Tech Challenge. Other corporate sponsors included Intel, KPMG, Tyco Electronics, Yahoo, SAP, David H. Liu Foundation, Northrop Grumman, The Bank of America Charitable Foundation, Seagate, AMD, SanDisk, Symantec, ATW, Adaptec and IBM.

About The Tech Museum of Innovation
The Tech Museum of Innovation is a hands-on technology and science museum for people of all ages and backgrounds. Located in San Jose, California – the Capital of Silicon Valley – its mission, as a public-benefit corporation, is to inspire the innovator in everyone. Through hands-on exhibits, educational programs, the annual Tech Challenge team competition for youth, and the internationally recognized Tech Museum Awards, presented by Applied Materials, Inc., The Tech Museum of Innovation honors the past, celebrates the present, and encourages the development of innovative ideas for a more promising future. For more information about The Tech Museum of Innovation, visit www.thetech.org.

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