

This past month, seven Wayne Trace High School students participated in the BEST Robotics competition, pitting 25 teams from across the country in a contest to develop, build, and market a robot that could successfully perform a variety of construction and demolition-related tasks. This group consists of students in grades 9 through 12 who currently take Megan Chapman's Scientific Research and Design class, are members of the after-school Robotics Club, or participate in both the class and the club. Led by seniors Eli Spinner and Xander Kohart, the robot's driving team also included sophomore Eli Stuart and freshman Eli Martinez along with freshman Kal-El Lands in the pit. The marketing team included sophomores Kailyn Dienstberger and Emma Laukhuf along with freshman Eli Martinez.

BEST (Boosting Engineering, Science & Technology) Robotics challenges students to learn more about engineering through the creation and programming of a robot, researching and recordkeeping the process as part of an engineering notebook, and presenting their project and product as part of a comprehensive marketing plan to meet the requirements of a specific theme. To complete the given tasks in this year's Demo Daze challenge, the Wayne Trace Robotics Team designed a tank-drive robot with a forklift and autonomous driving features which could lift and move a variety of objects within the game course in a specific amount of time.

While the marketing competition took place virtually over the course of two evenings starting on December 3, the robot challenge took place on Saturday, December 11 at the simulated construction and demolition site at Grove City College north of Pittsburgh. This year's big competition took on a new look with only six teams competing at the Pennsylvania location and scores feeding into a national scoreboard in Denver. The Wayne Trace team, with their robot nicknamed Blockbuster, competed head-to-head with these robots in thirteen rounds over the course of seven hours.

Although the Raider team did not place in the top three nationally, they gained a great deal of invaluable experience working, traveling, and competing together as a team. One of the students commented, "Our trip greatly helped the bonding of our team. This will greatly help our team in the future because more team bonding means that our team can collaborate better, and share ideas more efficiently. This trip also helped to give every team member several great memories that we will all have for a lifetime and has introduced many team members to things outside of rural Ohio."

A special thank you to our seniors, several of whom have been with the Wayne Trace program since it started five years ago--Eli Spinner, Xander Kohart, and Therin Coyne. The team now looks forward to recruiting new members and touring its robot around Northwest Ohio as part of a special thank you to its sponsors who include: Alliance Automation, Raven Technologies, Mercer Landmark, Tenneco, Paulding County Foundation, Pond Seed Company, Antwerp Exchange Bank, Federal Mogul, Dairy Queen, Reineke Family Dealerships, Alpha Delta State Ohio Educational Foundation Award of the Ohio State Organization of the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, Wayne Trace Alumni Club, along with the Wayne Trace School Board, Administration, and Staff.

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