

Statesman

Westlake robotics team advances to World Championship

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Westlake High School robotics students are stealing the regional science limelight once again.

Teacher and Coach Norman Morgan received the prestigious Woodie Flowers Finalist Award at the recent Alamo FIRST Robotics Hub City regional competition in Lubbock. The award celebrates effective communication in the art and science of engineering and design. Recipients are selected because of their unusual ability to lead, inspire and empower FIRST organizers said.

“This is a great honor for Coach Morgan,” said Westlake parent John Pflueger. “It is well-deserved recognition for his work in establishing Eanes’ Robotics programs, growing them to where they are today and the influence he has had on our children. We, and the rest of Eanes, are very fortunate to have his presence at the top of the program.”

Morgan said participation in robotics allows students to work hand in hand with industry professionals on real world problems.

“Contests present students with a problem that needs solving,” Morgan said. “There is no right answer to the solution, so it must be figured out. Students gain experience in teamwork, communications, problem solving and iteration throughout the process.”

The Lubbock regional competition included teams from Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Arkansas and Missouri, as well as students from Mexico. Westlake nabbed the event’s Regional Chairman’s Award for

excelling at spreading the spirit of change in the way young people think of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The award qualifies the Westlake to compete at the FIRST Robotics Competition World Championship April 24 to 27 in St. Louis, along with the top 400 qualifying teams out of more than 2,700 teams originally entered.

In addition, four Westlake FIRST Technical Challenge Teams reached the semifinals of the FIRST Tech Challenge Double Qualifying Tournament at Connally High School March 2 and will advance to the FIRST Alamo Regional Contest April 24-27 at the San Antonio Convention. The FTC teams are Pi-Rho Maniacs, Omegas, Taus and Sigmas. The Pi-Rhos and Omegas won their division in robot head-to-head competition. Pi-Rhos and Taus won the Rockwell Collins Innovate award for two divisions. The four teams were finalists in five different categories. Events are free and open to the public. Chap Robotics will host a webcast of the upcoming competitions online at www.thebluealliance.com/events.

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