

FIRST in Upper Midwest
January 16, 2020
Re: Grant Awards for Competitive Robotics Hubs

FIRST in Upper Midwest is pleased to announce the selection of five Minnesota communities to receive Competitive Robotics Hubs grants. Specific sites in Becker, Byron, Duluth, Minneapolis, and St. Paul will host Robotics practice facilities starting late-winter 2020.

This phase marks the beginning of efforts to secure practice facilities for the more than 220 *FIRST* Robotics Competition teams in Minnesota. Just as hockey, football, and basketball teams have dedicated practice facilities, now high school robotics teams will benefit from similar resources.

Competitive Practice Facilities will be established in:

- Becker, MN: Central Minnesota Robotics Hub (Alex Jurek, lead contact)
- Byron, MN: Byron Public Schools/Byron Robotics (Aaron Nepstad, lead contact)
- Duluth, MN: Duluth Robotics Inc./Arrowhead Robotics Coalition (Doug Frisk, lead contact)
- Minneapolis, MN: Minneapolis Public Schools/Minneapolis Urban Robotics Alliance (Tim Dirr, lead contact)
- St. Paul, MN: Hmong College Prep Academy (Ryan Lester, lead contact)

To be awarded a grant to establish a Competitive Robotics Hub, organizations needed to show how establishment of a practice facility in their area would serve the greatest number of teams possible. These grants are made possible in part via a \$100,000 grant through the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

“When we talked to teams and mentors, availability of local practice facilities was high on their list.” said Steve Peterson, chairman of the Board of Directors, *FIRST* in Upper Midwest. “I’m excited to see how these first hub sites enhance the *FIRST* Robotics Competition program, inspiring more students to consider STEM careers.”

FIRST in Upper Midwest would like to thank those involved in making this project possible:

- *FIRST* Team 1816 - The Green Machine from Edina, for their work in creating the grant opportunity
- Legislative sponsors Senators Melisa Franzen (DFL)*, Paul Anderson (R), Susan Kent (DFL), Eric Pratt (R), Melissa Wiklund (DFL), as well as

Representatives John Huot (DFL), Heather Edelson (DFL), and Tama Theis (R), for their strong support of this initiative

- Gene Jasper, who led the selection process for *FIRST* in Upper Midwest, and the members of the selection committee
- All of the organizations who made or considered making grant proposals

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