



NEWS RELEASE

Patricia Huffman Smith NASA Museum

'Remembering Columbia'
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High school teams invited to compete in Space Shuttle Columbia Memorial Robotics Competition

HEMPHILL, TX – The annual Shuttle Columbia Memorial Robotics competition will return on Tuesday, January 31, 2023, in conjunction with remembrance activities planned for the 20th anniversary of the Space Shuttle Columbia tragedy.

Sponsored by the Patricia Huffman Smith NASA Museum 'Remembering Columbia' in Hemphill, the competition is open to high schools from surrounding communities in East Texas and western Louisiana.

Several prizes, including cash stipends and tickets to Space Center Houston at NASA's Johnson Space Center, will be awarded to the winning schools.

This year's competition will feature a maximum of 10 teams, consisting of 3-4 members each, so early registration is encouraged. Students in grades 9-12 are eligible to participate. While only 10 teams will compete in the robotics challenge, additional groups are welcome to observe.

The competition, scheduled for 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., will be held at the First Baptist Church Family Life Center, located at 301 Mann Street in Hemphill. A panel of judges made up of NASA astronauts and engineers will also be on-site to offer feedback and mentoring to the teams.

Under the direction of their team coaches, students will use LEGO EV3 robotics kits to complete a simulated space exploration mission.

Prior to the competition day, teams will receive an information packet describing the challenge, official rules and judging criteria, as well as a list of supplies that will be provided by the museum.

The winning team will be invited to take part in a special recognition at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, February 1 as part of a program at the 'Remembering Columbia' Museum.

Interested schools should contact the museum's Robotics Competition coordinators Ellen and Steve Mills at columbiamuseum@yahoo.com or ellen@millsimpressions.com.

The robotics competition is one of many events scheduled in a multi-day public observance marking 20 years since the Space Shuttle Columbia tragedy in East Texas on February 1, 2003. An art display, NASA exhibitions, lectures and panel discussions by current and former NASA dignitaries and astronauts, museum tours, and the annual Remembering Columbia Memorial Service are among a full schedule to be released later this year.

The Patricia Huffman Smith NASA Museum 'Remembering Columbia' serves as a memorial to the 2003 Space Shuttle Columbia tragedy and as an educational facility dedicated to creating science and technology-inspiring learning opportunities for children and adults. Learn more at www.NASAColumbiaMuseum.com.

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