



CONTACT:

Lynn Dohm

lynnd@nellygrp.com

Ph: 815.530.7307

The world unites in Tennessee for the international underwater robotics competition

Ensuring public safety, maintaining healthy waterways and preserving historical artifacts are all on task for students participating in the 18th annual MATE International ROV Competition. The underwater robotics competition is set for June 20-22, at the Kingsport Aquatic Center and MeadowView Conference Resort and Convention Center in Kingsport, Tennessee.

Known for its Great Smoky Mountain range, Daniel Boone's Wilderness Trail, lazy winding rivers and landmarks for historic Civil War battles, Kingsport, Tennessee, is the ideal setting to showcase how underwater robots can be and are used in inland waterways. Some of the brightest minds from around the world will descend upon the region to compete with remotely operated vehicles (ROVs) they designed and built.

The 2019 MATE International ROV Competition is collaborating with Eastman, a Fortune 500 company with its headquarters in Kingsport. This global specialty materials company produces a range of advanced materials, additives and other functional products found in everyday items. Eastman is focused on being forward-thinking as well as sustainable and committed to doing "Good for Good." In working together, the MATE ROV Competition along with Eastman are tasking competitors with operating their ROVs in the simulated freshwater environments of Boone Lake, Boone Dam and the South Fork Holston River, all located in and around Kingsport, TN.

"The MATE ROV Competition is thrilled to head to the mountains and waterways of eastern Tennessee. The location for the international championship and our partnership with Eastman is allowing us to expose students to new and different ways that underwater robots can be used to benefit society. From working to ensure that our infrastructure is safe to monitoring water quality for the health of aquatic species and making certain that pieces of our nation's history live on, these students and their inventions are doing 'Good for Good,'" said Jill Zande, president of MATE

Inspiration for Innovation (MATE II) and associate director and competition coordinator for MATE Center.

The MATE ROV Competition requires students to apply math, electronics, engineering and physics skills from the classroom toward solving problems based on real-world workplace scenarios. The competition challenges students from K-12, community colleges and universities within four levels (EXPLORER, RANGER, NAVIGATOR, and SCOUT) to design, build and test underwater robots to complete specified, simulated real-world missions. They also must organize themselves into mock companies, an exercise that encourages them to develop entrepreneurial thinking and business and project management skills, while spurring innovation and collaboration to produce and compete with their ROVs.

The simulated mission this year stems from Eastman's doing "Good for Good." Teams must ensure public safety and healthy waterways by inspecting and repairing a hydroelectric dam; monitoring water quality, determining habitat diversity and restoring fish habitat; and recovering a Civil War era cannon while marking the location of unexploded cannon shells.

"On behalf of Eastman and the Eastman Foundation, I am thrilled to welcome the international MATE Community to the mountains of East Tennessee," said David A. Golden, Eastman's Senior Vice President, Chief Legal & Sustainability Officer, and Corporate Secretary. "I'm often asked why Eastman invests in advancing ocean science, and the answer is simple – the ocean matters everywhere. There's no better opportunity to ensure the future of ocean science than to inspire today's students through real-world educational experiences like the MATE competitions. We appreciate Jill, the entire MATE organization, and their passion for advancing STEM education. We look forward to an exciting event."

Organized by the Marine Advanced Technology Education (MATE) Center and MATE II, the competition is supported by the Marine Technology Society's ROV Committee, the National Science Foundation, Eastman, Motorola Solutions Foundation, Teledyne Marine, and other technology and education-related organizations.

For more information, visit <https://www.marinetech.org/rov-competition-2/>. Journalists are invited to attend and should email [lynnd\(at\)nellygrp\(dot\)com](mailto:lynnd(at)nellygrp(dot)com) to request a complimentary media pass.

About the MATE International ROV Competition

Established with funding from the National Science Foundation at Monterey Peninsula College in 1997, the Marine Advanced Technology Education (MATE) Center worked with the Marine Technology Society's ROV Committee to create the MATE ROV Competition. The first event kicked off in 2001. Seventeen years later, MATE Inspiration for Innovation (MATE II) incorporated in the state of California as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. MATE II was founded to support and sustain ongoing education activities initiated at the MATE Center. To learn more, visit <https://www.marinetech.org/rov-competition/>.

##