

Chairman's Award

Executive Summary:

- Team name: Robot Mafia Team 2424
- Sponsors:

Companies: Williams, Samson Oil and Gas, Callidus Technologies, J.H. Davidson and Associates, nFuse Technology, Rib Crib, Tulsa Talons, Vision4Technologies, Hill Manufacturing, Arvest Bank, and Whiteway Christmas

Individuals: Jerry and Jean Hammock, Don and Maxine Walker, Bill and Diana Beauliu, Curt Carmichael, Gary and Kimberly King, Craig and Zee Walker, Randy and Beth Lavercomb, Tracey Jacobs, Paul and Debbie Schmidt, and Stephanie Nourse.

Briefly describe the impact of the FIRST program on team participants:

Students on Team 2424 have all shown dramatic growth by being involved with the FIRST program. All but two or three seniors plan to major in engineering starting next year in college, and of those, only one senior does not plan on being in the math and science fields. Team members show loads of excitement and enthusiasm in everything from the Oklahoma Kick-Off to every new stage completed during building. FIRST Robotics has been a positive influence to everyone on the team.

Examples of role model characteristics for other teams to emulate:

Team 2424 works as a unit, relying on each other for advice and expertise in every area of the build. Our members are also always looking to help others. At a scrimmage in early February, one of our members help another team's mentor with Labview as well as other areas pertaining to the regional. Our team realizes nothing we do would ever happen without all the support and help we receive, and in turn look to give other teams and students at our school the same.

Describe the impact of the FIRST program on your team and the community:

Team 2424 has received unyielding support from the school and community. It's incredibly gratifying to have random students stop in awe of the robot. The administration has been extremely supportive, always looking for ways to help us and asking what they can do for us. It's also been incredible to have the Bixby community behind us. To have support on all levels makes it easier to put in all the time and effort FIRST Robotics takes. The past two years have made an incredible impact in Bixby.

Team's innovative methods to spread the FIRST message:

One of the points of pride for Team 2424 has been its efforts to spread the word of FIRST. For the second straight year, team members met with Callidus, one of our largest sponsors. We've been on Tulsa news stations as well as in many newspapers in Bixby and Tulsa. We have started one FLL team in one of our elementary schools and plan on starting more, as well as planning trips to Tulsa schools not involved in Robotics to get new FRC teams started and allow others to experience what we have.

Describe the strength of your partnership:

Team 2424 has the distinct honor of being supported by sponsors who want to be involved in what we do. Parents donate money as well as equipment, facilities, and time to our cause. Williams has set up a meeting with us as well as the meetings with Callidus. We've also received many inquiries from sponsors wanting to attend this year's OKC Regional. With the workload we have during the build season, having outstanding sponsors who stop at no odds for us makes what we do much easier.

Team's communication methods and results:

Team 2424's in-team communication is seamless. We have a facebook group, a website, e-mail, and text message system all working to get members updated. Members always know when meetings are being held and if they need anything at those meetings. We are also in contact with our sponsors and local news outlets. Whenever a stranger sees a team shirt and tells us they heard about us in the paper or on the news, it's a sign that we are letting the world know what we're doing.

Other matters of interest to the FIRST judges:

Team 2424 is completely a student-run team. Our new mentors this year had no previous understanding of FIRST Robotics until this year. All our students strive to learn as much as possible and depend on each other's advice and expertise. As a rookie team we won the Engineering Inspiration Award for the 2008 OKC Regional, a direct product of perseverance and ingenuity. Two of our team members even gave a presentation at the Oklahoma Robotics Summit on fundraising and team building.

Chairman's Award Essay

Team 2424 has striven to be a role model and guide since day one. In our rookie season last year, we struggled for money and at one point weren't sure whether the season would even happen. Thankfully our wonderful collection of sponsors, mentors, and community members came through for us. They also helped us immensely in raising money for the Championship, when we raised about \$20,000 in two weeks. Winning the Engineering Inspiration at the 2008 OKC Regional and going to the Championship in Atlanta was only possible with their help. Their contributions exemplified what FIRST is about, so our team does our best to emulate that spirit every day.

Starting last season, we worked to start an FLL team in one of our elementary schools and are looking to add more teams starting this season. We are also working on adding more FRC teams to the FIRST community in Tulsa. Our team never stops striving to spread the message of FIRST. This summer two of our team members gave a presentation on fundraising and team building to around 50 people at the OK Robotics Summit. To be such a young team and to be asked to do this was a huge honor.

At Kick-Off last year (our first year), we were the first team done with the kit-bot, a surprise for everyone, including ourselves. At Kick-Off this year, we had a couple members that were asked to stay and help other teams after the rest of the team went home. In early February, several of our team members attended a scrimmage at Tulsa Technology Center. Members of Team 2424 volunteered to help set up the field management system. One of our members also helped another team's mentor with Labview, as well as helping inform them on all things pertaining to the regional. That same member set up a time to go attend a meeting at another school and let them know what goes on at a FRC Regional.

Our team saw another obstacle at the beginning of this season when both our mentors took teaching jobs at other schools. We looked to two new teachers to oversee us, neither of them having any previous knowledge of FIRST Robotics. We could have let this discourage us, but we took the challenge head on and continued with the same perseverance that led to so much success in our first year. Our members try to constantly be an example to the team, the school, the local community, and the FIRST community at large.

Team 2424 feels that one of the biggest ways to spread FIRST's message is getting sponsors involved with what we do. Donating money doesn't require much involvement beyond maybe one or two short meetings. We feel that each of our sponsors deserves our time for the contributions they give. For the second straight year, team members met with Callidus Technologies for a news-covered meeting at their offices. Williams, another of our largest sponsors, has also requested a meeting after the regional. These meetings are an honor for us, because they mean our sponsors want more than a distant involvement. They want to know what we do as well as let us know what they do as a company, wanting to interest us in science and technology. Our relationship with our sponsors went even further, as we have received several requests on information about the 2009 OKC Regional so employees from our sponsors can plan company trips and attend.

Our team's ability to appear on the news many times the last two seasons as well as in a large amount of newspaper articles, both in our local community and in the region, is a testament to our members' unceasing effort to spread the message of FIRST. We contact every news outlet we can to have our name and message "out there" constantly.

We have even inspired so many people that a newspaper from another region of Oklahoma actually contacted us when they were looking for a story. When people come to us to learn more about FIRST, it makes our job of increasing knowledge about FIRST and engineering much easier.

Due to our success in our rookie season, we've been a role model for many young teams as well as schools aspiring to be involved in FIRST. The fact that we were asked to give a presentation on fundraising and team building after only our first season is a testament in itself to our efforts to make FIRST proud. We've gained renown in the Tulsa area as well as on a state level, in the news and in FIRST. Because of this, team leaders for Team 2424 are always in close contact with Oklahoma Regional Director of US FIRST, Harold Holly. When the MC for the OKC Regional had to drop out a week before the regional and no other FIRST MCs were available, Mr. Holly contacted our team leaders about having one of our team members MC the regional. His consideration of our team, despite our relative FIRST youth, was a huge compliment, and we agreed to provide an MC for the 2009 OKC Regional. We hope to continually inspire others through our success, hard work, and dedication to the FIRST message and cause.