

Robot scheme 'chips in' to science education

National Grid launches Vex Robotics programme in local schools

30 Sep 2014

- **Robots set to inspire the young engineers of the future**
- **Free robotics kit worth £2,000 up for grabs**

National Grid is inviting secondary schools in the Halstead area to join an exciting new education programme, encouraging youngsters in Essex and Suffolk to become the engineers of the future.

Three schools in Suffolk have already taken up the company's offer of free VEX robotics kits, worth nearly £2,000 each, but a fourth kit is still up for grabs.

Schools can use the kit to design and build their own robots. The students will be challenged to pitch their robots against each other at an end of term competition. They can then go on to compete in regional and national competitions.

Students and teachers who are interested in the kit are asked to contact the company on 0800 377 7340. To qualify, the school or college must be located in Essex or Suffolk and be willing to participate in the end of term competition.

Over the autumn term, National Grid engineers and the VEX Robotics training team will support the students as they create their own robots, developing valuable science, technology, engineering and maths skills along the way.

Brian Smethurst, Senior Project Manager for National Grid, said: "National Grid is passionate about encouraging young people to consider engineering as an exciting and rewarding career.

"We're facing a real shortage of engineers in the energy and utilities industry in this country and there are great career opportunities available for young people if they choose to study science, technology, engineering and maths. VEX Robotics is a fun way for students to learn these skills."

Since October 2009, National Grid has been consulting on proposals to build a high voltage electricity transmission connection between Bramford in Suffolk and Twinstead in Essex. It is needed to connect a number of new power generators to the national transmission network in East Anglia.

Brian added: "Although the Bramford to Twinstead Connection project has been put temporarily on hold, we are committed to keeping in touch with local communities. By sponsoring the VEX Robotics programme for schools in the area, we hope to inspire youngsters to think about a career in engineering."

- Ends -

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Notes to Editors:

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In Britain, we run the gas and electricity systems that our society is built on, delivering gas and electricity across the country. In the North Eastern US, we connect more than seven million gas and electric customers to vital energy sources, essential for our modern lifestyles.

National Grid in the UK:

- ? We own the high-voltage electricity transmission network in England and Wales, operating it across Great Britain
- ? We own and operates the high pressure gas transmission system in Britain
- ? Our gas distribution business delivers gas to 11 million homes and businesses
- ? We also own a number of related businesses including LNG importation, land remediation and metering
- ? National Grid manages the National Gas Emergency Service free phone line on behalf of the industry – 0800 111 999 (all calls are recorded and may be monitored).
- ? Our portfolio of other businesses is mainly concerned with infrastructure provision and related services where we can exploit our core skills and assets to create value. These businesses operate in areas such as Metering, Grain LNG Import, Interconnectors and Property. National Grid Carbon Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of National Grid and it undertakes Carbon Capture Storage related activities on behalf of National Grid.

National Grid in the US:

- ? In the northeast US, we connect more than seven million gas and electric customers to vital energy sources, essential for our modern lifestyles.
 - ? National Grid delivers electricity to approximately 3.3 million customers in Massachusetts, New York and Rhode Island.
- It is the largest distributor of natural gas in northeastern U.S., serving approximately 3.4 million customers in New York, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island.

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National Grid is pivotal to the energy systems in the UK and the north eastern United States. We aim to serve customers well and efficiently, supporting the communities in which we operate and making possible the energy systems of the future.

National Grid in the UK:

- We own and operate the electricity transmission network in England and Wales, with day-to-day responsibility for balancing supply and demand. We also operate, but do not own, the Scottish networks. Our networks comprise approximately 7,200 kilometres (4,474 miles) of overhead line, 1,500 kilometres (932 miles) of underground cable and 342 substations.
- We own and operate the gas National Transmission System in Great Britain, with day-to-day responsibility for balancing supply and demand. Our network comprises approximately 7,660 kilometres (4,760 miles) of high-pressure pipe and 618 above-ground installations.
- As Great Britain's System Operator (SO) we make sure gas and electricity is transported safely and efficiently from where it is produced to where it is consumed. From April 2019, Electricity System Operator (ESO) is a new standalone business within National Grid, legally separate from all other parts of the National Grid Group. This will provide the right environment to deliver a balanced and impartial ESO that can realise real benefits for consumers as we transition to a more decentralised, decarbonised electricity system.
- Other UK activities mainly relate to businesses operating in competitive markets outside of our core regulated businesses; including interconnectors, gas metering activities and a liquefied natural gas (LNG) importation terminal – all of which are now part of National Grid Ventures. National Grid Property is responsible for the management, clean-up and disposal of surplus sites in the UK. Most of these are former gas works.

Find out more about the energy challenge and how National Grid is helping find solutions to some of the challenges we face at <https://www.nationalgrid.com/group/news>

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