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For Immediate Release

SRS Sponsored Robotics Team Attends International Championship Competition

AIKEN, S.C. May 19, 2023 –Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) once again sponsored the Aiken High School's [M'Aiken Magic](#) robotics team who recently travelled to Houston, Texas, where the team successfully competed in an international robotics championship competition hosted by FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology). FIRST is a world-wide educational program offered to students 8th through 12th grade.

Students on each team work together to build a robot from scratch for this annual, multi-competition challenge, presented by FIRST. The organization's mission is to "inspire young people to be science and technology leaders and innovators" while developing new science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) skills in the process.

"As a company, we at SRNS understand the importance of a STEM-based education and that many students best learn STEM-based curricula using unconventional means, such as through designing, building and operating a robot," said Sean Alford, SRNS Executive Vice President and Chief of Administration. "We have been financial sponsors of the M'Aiken Magic program for many years."

After winning their district qualifiers in Anderson and Hartsville, South Carolina, M'Aiken Magic went on to the Peachtree District Championship where they finished in second place out of the 50 best teams from both Georgia and South Carolina. With this finish, they qualified to attend the world championship in Houston, Texas, where they competed against more than 600 teams.

The championship competition in Houston was divided into eight divisions of approximately 70 teams each. After each division plays two days of three-on-three style qualification matches, teams are seeded based on their performance. The top eight seeds select their alliance partners to play in the divisional tournament.

"Our team already knew it was going to be an uphill battle when we discovered that our division not only included two of the reigning world champion teams, but also the number one ranked robot in the world from this season," said Ambrose Wiering, who works with robots at the Savannah River Site while mentoring the team. "But M'Aiken Magic has never been a team to shy away from a challenge. And after the second day of qualification matches, they ended up seeding ninth out of the 77 teams in their division."

This meant that when the powerhouse top ranked team in the world from Ontario picked the five-time world champion team from California to play with them in the tournament, M'Aiken Magic shifted into the eighth seed spot and became an alliance captain. They selected team Up-A-Creek robotics from Colorado and team GEMS from Michigan as members of their alliance.

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In the double elimination bracket, M'Aiken Magic's alliance immediately faced off against the powerhouse top seed alliance and no one expected them to win. But in a stunning upset, the underdogs were victorious, and the first seed team was eliminated soon after. M'Aiken Magic's team then unfortunately fell short in their next match, falling into the lower bracket where they found themselves needing a win to survive. According to Wiering, they played their hearts out and lost their last match of the season by a razor thin margin of 190-192. The team that eliminated them went on to win the division.

"This season has been the most successful season in recent memory for our team," said Wiering. "We hope to return to the world stage next season."

Any students interested in joining the team can reach out to maikenmagicrobotics@gmail.com for more information.

"I want to thank Savannah River Nuclear Solutions for their generous financial support of our program. Due to your contributions, our program has made a significant educational impact across Aiken County," said Wiering. "Without SRNS, this amazing experience would not have been possible, much less winning a few matches against the best of the best, an unbelievable achievement for this team."

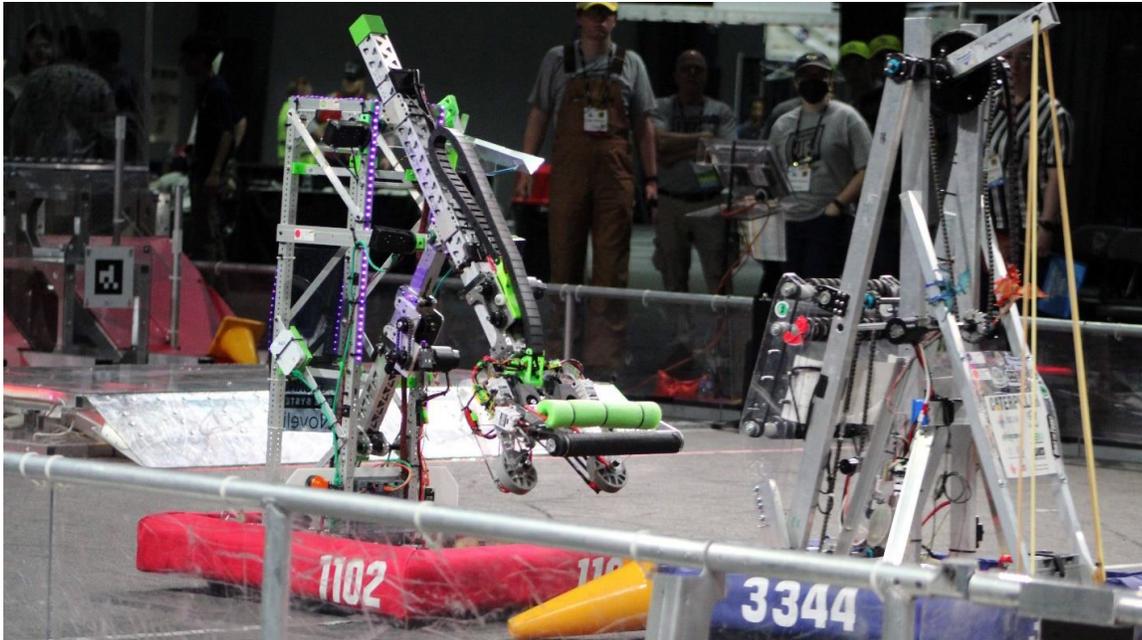
Other sponsors included: Aiken County Public Schools, BAE Systems, Battelle Savannah River Alliance, Bechtel, Bosch, Crane Fund, Generac Power Systems, John Deere, Shaw Industries and Weldon Wyatt.

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, a Fluor-led company with Newport News Nuclear and Honeywell, is responsible for the management and operations of the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site, located near Aiken, South Carolina.

[PHOTOS BELOW]

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Aiken High School's M'Aiken Magic team, sponsored by Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, successfully competed in the robotics world championship competition during a recent trip to Houston, Texas. (M'Aiken Magic robot left)



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Aiken High School's M'Aiken Magic robotics team placed first in the district qualifier held in Hartsville, South Carolina.

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