

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 225

BY SENATOR GATTI

A RESOLUTION

To commend the Cyber Innovation Center and Executive Director Craig Spohn on the Regional Autonomous Robotics Circuit.

WHEREAS, in 2008, two teachers from Bossier Parish schools, Richard Warren (Benton Middle School) and Marvin Nelson (Benton High School), recognized their students' desire for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and cyber education beyond the classroom and began an annual robotics competition; and

WHEREAS, with their vision and hard work, combined with support from Bossier Parish schools' administration, the Northwest Louisiana Autonomous Robotics Competition (NWLA ARC) was born and this event was held each May at Benton Middle School and served over two hundred students; and

WHEREAS, in 2010, the NWLA ARC committee requested the Cyber Innovation Center (CIC) to sponsor the event; and

WHEREAS, CIC leadership recognized the value of the program and the potential of engaging a greater number of students through a strategic partnership; and

WHEREAS, in order to help expand STEM and cyber learning opportunities in the region, the CIC partnered with the founding schools to host the 2010 and 2011 competitions and participation grew each year; and

WHEREAS, during this time, the CIC also received requests from both school administrators and teachers for more opportunities to engage their students in hands-on STEM and cyber learning throughout the academic school year; and

WHEREAS, the CIC offered to expand the annual competition to a circuit of competitions scheduled each fall, winter, and spring, and took the lead on the administrative responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Autonomous Robotics Circuit (RARC) kicked off in September 2011 in Bossier City, Louisiana, with thirty-seven different schools from seven parishes participating in the 2011-2012 RARC with 508 students in grades 4-12 benefitting

from the program; and

WHEREAS, the 2012-2013 RARC experienced a 41% increase in participation over the previous year with over 825 elementary, middle, and high school students from 48 schools participating; and

WHEREAS, RARC reached a milestone during the 2013-2014 school year with 1,000 students impacted in a single school year; and

WHEREAS, the RARC continues to grow not only in attendance but in also the variety of students who benefit and the number of parishes/counties served; and

WHEREAS, teams from afterschool and homeschool programs as well as charter schools have joined the public and private school teams at the competitions; and

WHEREAS, additionally, RARC in Northwest Louisiana, originally open to students in grades 4-12, now includes students in third grade and will begin allowing students in second grade to compete next year; and

WHEREAS, this STEM and cyber program is reaching students earlier and earlier and offering an opportunity for students to remain engaged at each grade level; and

WHEREAS, the integrated competition guidelines align with Louisiana curricula standards, and the competitions build upon one another so students can enhance and hone their skills throughout the school year; and

WHEREAS, the CIC is working with school districts from other communities in order to expand the RARC "footprint"; and communities in South Carolina and Arkansas have piloted RARC, and RARC South Louisiana (Baton Rouge) and RARC Northeast Louisiana (Ruston/Monroe) have been active for the last two years; and these additional locations have allowed RARC to reach more students while keeping costs to a minimum; and

WHEREAS, the elementary division (grades 3-5) is now the largest division with more registered teams than the middle and high school divisions; and

WHEREAS, the elementary division has 37% female participation while the high school division has female participation at 41%; and

WHEREAS, beginning in 2017-2018, some middle school teams chose to compete in the high school division and won trophies; and

WHEREAS, including this year, RARC Northwest Louisiana has presented approximately \$34,275 in technology awards to winning schools in the last seven years.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend the Cyber Innovation Center (CIC) and Executive Director Craig Spohn on the Regional Autonomous Robotics Circuit.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the Cyber Innovation Center and Executive Director Craig Spohn.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE