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## West Virginia's Young Talent Continues to Shine

*From The Governor's Desk*  
**A weekly column by Gov. Joe Manchin**

**Charleston, WV (HNN)** -- Preparing young people for the high-tech economy is not just a statement, it is essential. A technical savvy workforce of the future is only possible, if we are preparing today. Leaders throughout West Virginia have talked on numerous occasions about finding ways to implement a strategy that will lead to a new economy. By now, it is understood that an educated workforce is the key to economic development.



One way to ensure that our technology pursuits continue to take shape is by cultivating the next generation of young minds. It is imperative that our young people understand that education, innovation and creativity, are vital if our state expects to compete with the rest of the world.

Recently, I was pleased to hear that West Virginia has a group of bright young students who are preparing to take their scientific knowledge to another level – as they will soon enter a national robotics competition.

The Trinity Christian School's Robo Warriors will represent West Virginia in the 2009 International Lego Robotics Competition. The Robo Warriors won the West Virginia Championship this past December, which was held at Wheeling Jesuit University. The Trinity teams' excellence here in West Virginia, has given them the right to participate in the First Lego League (FLL) World Championship at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta, April 17-21.

FLL competition stimulates and develops the high technology of tomorrow, by instructing potential scientists and robotics engineers through teamwork, research, education and scientific growth. The culmination of the contest involves programming and design of the team robot, which must perform specific functions and complete a standardized course in a specific amount of time. Teams from more than 85 countries have been invited to take part in this international challenge.

This state knows how important technology is to our growth and what its role will be as we plan ahead. Technology-based economic development will be an economic imperative, and I know that it can only be sustained if we have young people with skill-level, capable of meeting its demands.

It is also important that our young people understand that West Virginia is competing not only with our neighboring states, but also globally. And, if West Virginia is going to be successful in the global marketplace we must equip our children and grandchildren with the skills needed to be competitive. Exposing our young people to science-based competitions, not only gives our young people a chance to see where they stack up against the nation, but also gives them a better understanding of what it takes to succeed as they develop into young adults. We must continue to encourage our young people to get involved and strive for educational success. Our future depends on it.

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