

MVTHS establishes FIRST robotics team

By RORYE O'CONNOR

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MT. VERNON — A FIRST robotics team will be established at Mt. Vernon Township High School to encourage an interest in robotics.

The MVTHS Board of Education gave its approval for establishment of the group after meeting with sponsor Steve Odle and several students who are interested in robotics.

FIRST stands for "For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology," said Odle.

"A lot of major companies are interested in robotics," Odle told the board. "They need people who

can work on the robots. We have 10 committed students who said they will join. We expect 20 to 25 total."

Odle said the group would help provide a technologically literate workforce to the community.

In addition, he said the local JC Penney has signed a memo of understanding saying they will provide \$6,500 toward the robotics club's goals.

In addition, Peacock Printing has donated about \$9,000 worth of software to the club, Odle said.

FIRST was founded in 1989 by inventor Dean Kamen to inspire interest and participation in science and technology, information states.

It is a not-for-profit public charity engages youth in "exciting mentor-based programs that build science, engineering and technology skills," which "inspire innovation and foster well-rounded life capabilities, including self-confidence, communication and leadership."

The organization has several categories: The FIRST Robotics Competition and the FIRST Tech Challenge for high schoolers; the FIRST LEGO League for fourth through eighth graders; the Junior FIRST LEGO League for kindergarten students through third

see FIRST/Page 3A

FIRST

continued from 1A

graders; and FIRST Place, a research, development and training facility at the FIRST headquarters in New Hampshire.

The MVTHS Board also recently discussed the donation of land to the district.

MVTHS Superintendent Mike Smith said Ten Oaks Properties is in the process of donating a parcel of property to the district located

west of the G building parking lot that is already being used by students for parking.

"They don't have any use

for the space at this time," Smith said. "They have graciously moved forward with us to donate it."

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