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NEWS RELEASE

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Iowa High School Students to Compete in Real World Design Challenge

Competition Fosters Growth in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Fields

Des Moines, IA., January 24, 2013 – Teams of students from seven Iowa high schools across the state will compete in the Real World Design Challenge on Saturday, January 26, 2013 at the Science Center of Iowa. The Real World Design Challenge is an annual event run by a public-private partnership with the goal of sustainably increasing the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) workforce. The day-long event will take place from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., and will include presentations from the participating teams, concluding with one team receiving the Governor’s Cup, awarded by Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds, and an all-expense paid trip to Washington, DC for the national finals.

Teams from Central Lee High School (Donnellson, IA), Clinton High School (Clinton, IA), West High School (Davenport, IA), Hoover High School (Des Moines, IA), Indianola High School (Indianola, IA), Marshalltown High School (Marshalltown, IA) and Sioux City West High School (Sioux City, IA) utilized professional engineering software to develop their solutions. During the competition, they will share their designs and demonstrate the value of their solutions for “a small unmanned aircraft system (sUAS), which includes one or more fixed-wing unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and to develop a business plan in support of commercial applications.” The team designs and presentations will be judged by a panel consisting of professors from Iowa’s Regent Universities, industry professionals from Lockheed Martin, NASA Marshall Space Flight Center, and Rockwell Collins, as well as representatives from the Iowa Department of Education and the Iowa College Student Aid Commission (Iowa College Aid).

“The Real World Design Challenge is a great opportunity for Iowa students to apply classroom learning to complex problems facing our state and nation,” said Karen Misjak, executive director of Iowa College Aid. “Iowa is faced with a worker shortage in STEM fields. We need to encourage greater student achievement and interest in STEM careers. Iowa College Aid is proud to support and promote programs, such as the Real World Design Challenge, that provide students with opportunities to engage in STEM activities so that they see new possibilities for their future.”

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High schools from across the state were encouraged to form teams of 3-7 students in grades 9 through 12 to compete in the RWDC. Schools with participating teams received \$1 million in professional engineering software, training on the software, curriculum materials and access to mentors. GEAR UP Iowa (administered by Iowa College Aid) was able to assist its partner schools in securing and funding the necessary technology capable of running the complex engineering software, making it possible for students from their schools to participate in this year's challenge. Five of the seven competing teams are from GEAR UP Iowa partner schools.

The state-level RWDC is sponsored by GEAR UP Iowa (administered by the Iowa College Student Aid Commission), the Iowa Department of Education, John Deere, Rockwell Collins, Iowa State University, Heartland AEA, Marshall Space Flight Center, STEM Advisory Council and STEM Hub Managers, Science Center of Iowa, the Iowa Space Grant Consortium and the national Real World Design Challenge.

For more information on the Real World Design Challenge event in Iowa, please contact Iowa College Aid at 877-272-4456. General information regarding the Real World Design Challenge is accessible online at <http://www.realworlddesignchallenge.org/>. In addition, information to help Iowa families plan, prepare and pay for college is available on Iowa College Aid's website, www.IowaCollegeAid.gov.

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About the Iowa College Student Aid Commission

Iowa College Aid provides college access, financial literacy, and outreach services to Iowa's students and families as they plan, prepare and pay for college. Iowa College Aid also administers state scholarship, grant, work study, and loan forgiveness programs totaling over \$60.0 million annually; provides I Have A Plan Iowa™, the state-designated career information system, free to all Iowans; partners with financial institutions in the state to offer an online financial literacy platform free to all Iowa high schools; conducts research and distributes higher education data; and offers Iowans assistance in obtaining student financial aid and college-related information. Additionally, Iowa College Aid is the administrator of the Federal GEAR UP Grant, a multi-year state-wide grant which is being used to provide early awareness programming and outreach initiatives to thousands of Iowa's students and families. Through its role, Iowa College Aid also serves as the state-designated administrator of the U.S. Department of Education's College Access Challenge Grant, which is designed to increase the college-going culture in Iowa. Iowa College Aid is also responsible for registering postsecondary institutions and other instructional schools under Iowa Code Chapter 261B and sections of Chapter 714. More information is available at www.IowaCollegeAid.gov.

About the Real World Design Challenge

The Real World Design Challenge (RWDC) is an annual high school competition run by a public-private partnership with the goal of sustainably increasing the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) workforce. The partners are focused on working within the context of the American educational system to transform STEM education in the United States by providing professional science and engineering and learning resources to students and teachers.

The RWDC began in 2008 through a partnership between industry, government, academia, and non-profit. The partners were committed to bringing a program to schools that brought professional engineering resources into the classroom, was free to participate in, and could scale to every school in the United States. The partners brought together \$263 million in resources and began working with governors to build an infrastructure of states to scale across the United States. The first year, ten states participated, with more states added every year.