**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND CONGRATULATE THE STATE CHAMPIONS OF THE DUE WEST ROBOTICS TEAM, TORNADO OF IDEAS, AND TO WISH THEM SUCCESS AT THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP IN HOUSTON, TEXAS.

Whereas, founded by Due West Mayor Charles Angel, Due West Robotics boasts four teams coached by Mayor Angel and other parents. One of the teams, the Tornado of Ideas, has won the South Carolina state championship in robotics, giving these students a berth at the world championship in Houston, Texas, in April; and

Whereas, the competition is conducted by FIRST, an acronym for For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology, and uses LEGO Mindstorms kits to inspire children between six and eighteen to use STEM technology to solve real‑world problems; and

Whereas, future engineers and inventors from ages six to eight are in teams called Junior FLL (FIRST Lego League), and teams from ages nine to fourteen are FLL, while older students choose between FIRST Tech Challenge for seventh through twelfth graders and FIRST Robotics Competition for ninth through twelfth graders; and

Whereas, four Due West teams include two FLL and two Junior FLL teams, all of which are truly community teams, composed of students from public, private and homeschools. From the twenty‑four thousand teams worldwide, one hundred eight teams will compete for the world championship title; and

Whereas, when the mayor’s oldest child Ethan received a LEGO Mindstorms kit for Christmas in 2011, he and some friends began working on projects together and attended a robotics camp where Ethan was encouraged to start a robotics team in Due West; and

Whereas, that fledgling effort in 2012 started with four Junior FLL members and has grown into the four teams that include one hundred forty‑three school‑aged students, more than ten percent of the town’s population of only twelve hundred fifty; and

Whereas, although teams have mentors, they do not supply the solutions to the problems or the work. The mentors simply support the students as those members try to realize their own ideas, including naming the team, creating a business plan, envisioning a workable invention, and pitching their invention to competition judges; and

Whereas, every year, nearly 300,000 participants complete projects around a theme selected by FIRST, by identifying a challenge and developing a solution using LEGO robotics; and

Whereas, this year’s theme is “Animal Allies”, and Tornado of Ideas developed the winning solution Goat Guard, which allows goats to keep their horns without getting them stuck in fences, a common problem. Team members interviewed farmers to identify the problem and then tested their invention on real goats, refining it based on feedback from the farmers; and

Whereas, Mayor Angel encourages neighboring communities to start teams, and he has held workshops to introduce the concept and teach the necessary skills. Partnering with Bosch in Anderson, their biggest sponsor, Due West Robotics plans to hold a Girls in STEM day to introduce middle and high school girls to FIRST; and

Whereas, Due West Robotics has expanded the program to include a club for game developers from ages twelve to eighteen, which only in its first year already has twenty members, and has added a high school team and a rocketry team; and

Whereas, the South Carolina Senate values the significant impact that Due West Robotics has made, as well as the pride and recognition that the members of Tornado of Ideas have brought to the Due West community. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, recognize and congratulate the state champions of the Due West Robotics team, Tornado of Ideas, and wish them success at the world championship in Houston, Texas.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Mayor Charles Angel.

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