



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**TO:** News Directors and Assignment Editors  
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### **SPiRiT Robotics Showcase at The Peter Kiewit Institute**

**Omaha, NE** ... The Peter Kiewit Institute meets the Jetsons on Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, when PKI hosts the first city-wide SPiRiT Robotics Showcase in their atrium from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thirty local public and parochial schools will participate and display their student's engineering skills with the CEENBoT educational program, the only robotics platform recognized by the National Science Foundation (NSF).

The SPiRiT (*Silicon Prairie Initiative on Robotics in Information Technology*) Showcase is a culmination of outreach to Omaha teachers over the past three years encouraging the use of robotics in their classrooms. Through workshops and summer programs, SPiRiT assists teachers with enhancing the study of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) by incorporating the assembly and manipulation of small programmable robots called "CEENBoTs" into their curriculum.

The CEENBoT platform was developed locally by students attending the University of Nebraska – Lincoln's Department of Computer and Electronics Engineering (CEEN). CEEN, housed in Omaha's Peter Kiewit Institute, was awarded a three-year grant by NSF to develop a national educational curriculum for support of STEM-based disciplines. This funding has supported development of the CEENBoT program and outreach to Omaha students ranging from elementary age through high school.

According to Dr. Bing Chen, Chair of the CEEN Department, "Our goal is to expose students at an earlier age to the opportunities in engineering in order to meet the rapidly growing demand for engineers, and to meet the technological needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century so that we continue to maintain our scientific and engineering dominance."

Over 150 students are expected to attend the Showcase and compete in multiple events. Competitions will entail creativity, documentation and student presentations, and require teamwork, skill, and precision to successfully race and maneuver CEENBoTs around difficult courses and obstacles. Presentations of curriculum and other supporting materials developed by teachers who attended SPiRiT workshops will be highlighted throughout the day. The closing ceremony will include recognition and prizes for winners in each category, and through the generosity of corporate sponsors, robotic kits and other engineering materials will be provided to area metro schools.

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The public is invited to attend the Robotics Showcase and celebrate three years of excellence under the NSF grant. In addition to the competitions, the public is encouraged to tour the Institute and observe the various projects which will be on display. Informational brochures on the University of Nebraska's College of Engineering and its programs will be available as well as programs housed here at the Peter Kiewit Institute. Spectators also welcome to fill out raffle tickets for prizes drawn before the Awards Ceremony.

A robotic arm produced by KUKA Robotics, utilized for industrial purposes and potentially for intricate medical procedures, will be demonstrated throughout the day. A demonstration on Swarm Robotics will occur in the afternoon and highlight the latest developments in research in this field of study. Corporate sponsor Cox Communications will also be present to explain how phone, internet, and cable connectivity reaches area homes and businesses. Other corporate sponsors include Lockheed Martin, Union Pacific, ConAgra, Pepsi, and Frito Lay.

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