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## NEWS RELEASE

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# Hawaiian Electric Companies' Hawai'i State VEX VRC Robotics Championship scheduled Jan. 12, 2019

*Hawai'i's top middle and high school robotics teams to compete for five spots at the 2019 VEX Worlds*

**HONOLULU, Dec. 19, 2018** – The 2019 Hawaiian Electric Companies' Hawai'i State VEX VRC Robotics Championship featuring Hawai'i's top middle and high school robotics teams will be held Jan. 12, 2019 at the University of Hawai'i, Mānoa Campus Center Ballroom. Opening ceremonies begin at 8:45 a.m. with qualification matches starting at 9 a.m. The event is free and open to the public.

Participation in the state championship is by invitation only through team qualifications at regional level tournaments or leagues, and spots for 36 teams are available. To date, registered teams are from Highlands Intermediate, Hilo High, Island Pacific Academy (Kapolei), Island Robotics (Waipahu), Kamehameha Schools – Kapālama, Kapolei Middle, Kea'au High, Kohala High, Maryknoll High, Maui High, Maui Waena (Kahului), Moloka'i High, Nānākuli High & Intermediate, Pearl City High, Sacred Hearts Academy, St. Joseph (Hilo), St. Louis, Waipahu High, and Waiialua High & Intermediate, with some schools or robotics clubs registering multiple teams.

The state competition will qualify five teams to advance to the 2019 VEX Worlds in Louisville, Kentucky next April where they will compete with over 1,200 of the top, student-led teams from around the world.

“Artificial intelligence, automation, and robotics are transforming jobs and the workplace,” said Art Kimura of the Hawai'i Space Grant Consortium, which helps organize the state competition. “VEX robotics students have the opportunity to apply their science, technology, engineering and mathematics skills in an engaging game-based engineering challenge while gaining valuable life lessons such as collaboration, problem-solving, time management, and critical thinking.”

The 2019 VEX game challenge is called “Turning Point,” and is played between two team alliances of two teams each (a red and a blue team) on a 12' x 12' square field. The object of the game is to attain a higher score than the opposing alliance by maneuvering the robot to perform specific actions, autonomously or driver-controlled, during a series of matches.

Since 2013, the Hawaiian Electric Companies have presented the VEX State Championships to advance STEM education and curriculum and promote interest in STEM careers among Hawai'i students. About 25-50 employees volunteer with team registration, field reset and queuing, and judging each year.

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