

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **OCE sponsors robotic invasion at Ontario Science Centre – Jan. 5/08** *High school students worldwide to compete for robot supremacy*

**TORONTO, ON. (Dec. 28, 2007)** – With the support of the Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE), the Ontario Science Centre will host the Canadian launch of the 2008 FIRST Robotics Competition – an international contest that gives high school students the chance to show their mettle.

The FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Competition challenges teams of high school students worldwide to construct robots over a six-week period. Working alongside teachers and engineers, teams from over 30 countries will design and build robots from identical competition components to undertake challenges where the objective is to score points by tasks such as shooting balls, stacking boxes or climbing over or under obstacles.

With over 1,000 Ontario students expected to attend, the competition kick-off will be held at the **Ontario Science Centre's Imperial Oil Auditorium on January 5, 2008 at 9:00 a.m.** A live video feed via satellite will engage high schools worldwide, connecting OSC with FIRST's Atlanta, GA headquarters as well as other countries around the world taking part. They will also receive their competition rules (the new game for their robots to play), robot kits and enjoy demonstrations of robotic devices.

"This event gets high school students as enthused about science as they are about competitive sport," said Blair Clarkson, Ontario Science Centre's Coordinator of Special Events & Attractions. "It has exceeded everyone's wildest expectations," he added, noting the competition's energetic atmosphere rivals any sporting event.

"This international event is the perfect venue to showcase the scientific innovation and creativity that thrives in Ontario's high schools," said Mark Romoff, OCE's president and CEO. "We are proud to be playing a part in raising the profile of science and technology. This event will inspire students across Ontario, which is critical for the province to continue to be a national and global leader in innovative technologies."

Teams will receive packages that contain over a dozen motors, a sophisticated control system, a pneumatic compressor, cylinders, valves, connectors, hardware such as ball bearings, various CAD and animation software. The robots they construct are usually under a metre long and wide, up to 1.5 metres high and weigh around 60 kilograms. With their mechanical athletes ready for battle, teams are judged for design, demonstrated team spirit, professionalism and maturity and the ability to overcome obstacles.

Ontario teams will prepare for two regional events – the Greater Toronto Regional (March 22-24, 2008) and the Waterloo Regional (March 27-29). Winners will move on to the World Championships on April 17 at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta.

#### **About Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE) Inc. – [www.oce-ontario.org](http://www.oce-ontario.org)**

Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE) Inc. drives the commercialization of cutting-edge research across key market sectors to build the economy of tomorrow and secure Ontario's global competitiveness. In doing this, OCE also fosters the training and development of the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs, and is a key partner with Ontario's industry, universities, colleges, research hospitals, investors and governments. OCE's five Centres work in communications and information technology, earth and environmental technologies, energy, materials and manufacturing, and photonics.

#### **About the Ontario Science Centre (OSC) – [www.ontariosciencecentre.ca](http://www.ontariosciencecentre.ca)**

The Ontario Science Centre uses science as the lens to inspire and actively engage people in new ways of seeing, understanding and thinking about themselves and the world. In 2006, the Ontario Science Centre unleashed its bold new Agents of Change transformation initiative to the world. The launch of the Weston Family Innovation Centre created a new, edgy experience area specifically for teenagers and young adults while outside, an exploration plaza TELUSCAPE, opened up its fore court to visitors and the nearby urban community. The Ontario Science Centre is an agency of the Government of Ontario.