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Newton Robotics Team gears up for the summer

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School's out for students at Newton High School after a long week and a half of final exams.

In late May, the team celebrated this year's success and events as well as shared their farewells with students of the Class of 2016 at the annual banquet. Lara Pennell and Jake Kolzow, who have been on the team since eighth grade, expressed how remarkable it was to be on the team and to have been co-captains for the past two years. The team's coach, Jim Hofmann, announced that Liam Oakes and Katie Nelson, both upcoming seniors, will be the next co-captains for the 2016-17 season.

While many other students anticipate on spending their summers hanging out with friends, going on vacation, relaxing on the beach, or hiking on an adventure, the

students of the Newton Robotics Team anticipate on gearing up for this summer's ten-day journey at the New Jersey State Fair/Sussex County Farm and Horse Show in Augusta, NJ.

After spending a total of 60 days at the fair for over 720 hours over the past six years, the team has finally been granted its own permanent location at the fair.

This year, the team will be spending ten days at its new STEM Barn, generously sponsored by Thorlabs, a high technical partner and Photonics company in Newton, NJ, and Mira Plastics, a local custom thermoplastic injection molding company in Fredon, NJ. The new 12' x 24' shed, currently being constructed by local Sussex County farming business Brodhecker Farms, will reflect the colors of these sponsors as well as aid in the promotion and expansion of STEM to the community.

The team is currently planning and organizing an opening ceremony to be held during one of the ten days of the fair. The team has invited New Jersey Lieutenant Governor Kim Guadagno, a strong advocate of STEM Education and the workforce, to attend the ribbon cutting ceremony. A few other legislators have been invited to celebrate the empowerment of STEM with the team as well.

Among those invited are also Assemblyman Jack Ciattarelli and Assemblyman Troy Singleton of New Jersey, sponsors of the pending A3879 Legislation. The purpose of this legislation is to require public schools in New Jersey to adopt a policy of presenting a varsity status to academic school teams, especially robotics. The Newton Robotics Team has been strongly supporting a varsity expansion to other non-athletic school teams since its initiation in 2009. In 2010, Newton High School became the first public school in New Jersey to grant a varsity status to its robotics team.

The team would also like to congratulate ARDEC at Picatinny Arsenal for the recent recognition by the State Senate for their long history in promoting STEM Education and careers throughout the nation. Picatinny Arsenal has been a major sponsor of the Newton Robotics Team for several years, providing them with opportunities in the STEM workforce as well as supporting the team for a new build season each year.

A date has not yet been selected for the opening ceremony, but is in progress. The New Jersey State Fair and Sussex County Farm and Horse Show will take place from August 5-14 at the Sussex County Fairgrounds in Augusta, NJ. The Newton Robotics Team will be at the new STEM Barn all day, 10:00am-10:00pm, with a special guest each day. Students are encouraging everyone to visit and see what STEM is truly all about.

Team Aperture will also be competing in the off-season competition, "MidKnight Mayhem," at Plainsboro High School this Saturday, June 25.