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SPACE AND ROBOTICS COLLIDE
DURING WORLD SPACE WEEK 2009 AT THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE!
Special NASA Robot Competition kicks-off the week Saturday, October 3!

Philadelphia, PA – September 24, 2009 – To celebrate World Space Week 2009, The Franklin Institute teams up with NASA for a week-long spectacular display of cutting-edge technologies and demonstrations that will allow visitors to see, hear, and feel the future of space and robotics! The event kicks-off with the fifth annual *Robotics Competition* on Saturday, October 3 and closes with a special installment of the popular monthly series *Night Skies in the Observatory* on Thursday, October 8. Throughout the week, a series of activities and speakers are planned to commemorate the 10th anniversary of World Space Week, the global space celebration which recognizes the contributions of space science and technology.

New this year, The Franklin Institute's PACTS (Partnerships for Careers in Technology and Science) youth program is partnering with NASA and NERC (Northeast Robotics Club) to host the annual Robotics Competition on Saturday, October 3 from 10am – 5pm. NASA representatives will be on hand throughout the day to answer questions and provide information on their space robots. Additionally, visitors can get a close look at an actual NASA Mars Rover model on view all week long. Held at The Franklin Institute each year, over 35 robots participate in the robot conflict tournament that pits robot against robot in a three-minute battle displaying ingenuity, engineering creativity, and resilience. During this competition visitors will see robots ranging in size from a minuscule, one-pound robot to a floor-shaking, thirty-pound robot use the best of intelligent design, along with innovative tools to battle one-another. The goal of the competition is to outmaneuver or disable the rival's robotic creation by relying on either their small but lethal power or an arsenal of gadgets to disarm their opponents. Saturday's events culminate with the awarding of the "Franklin Cup" to the team with the most innovative overall robot design.

Visitors to World Space Week 2009 at The Franklin Institute can see up to twelve actual static robots on display throughout the week from NASA's Jet Propulsion Labs, Drexel University, University of Pennsylvania and more. On Saturday, October 3, hear from NASA robotics engineer Mike Garrett as he presents highlights from his work at NASA. Other activities include lunar landing tours, live shows and cart activities all designed to celebrate science and technology. Also on

Saturday, visitors can enter to win one of three Celestron FirstScope Series Telescopes that will be raffled off throughout the course of the day!

On Thursday, October 8, The Franklin Institute's *Night Skies in the Observatory* program takes on a robotic theme this month with special guest speaker Smithsonian Museum scientist Andrew Johnston. Author of *Earth from Space*, Johnston visits The Franklin Institute to talk about how we see the Earth from space and explain the robots that make these images possible. During this monthly event, from 6-9pm, the Joel N. Bloom Observatory is open to the public and offers 5 different telescopes for nighttime viewing led by Chief Astronomer Derrick Pitts. Sponsored by Celestron, *Night Skies in the Observatory* also includes a Fels Planetarium show and a lecture or presentation on an astronomical or space science topic. Admission is \$5.00. All other World Space Week 2009 activities are included with the general sci-pass admission.

About The Franklin Institute

Founded in honor of America's first scientist, Benjamin Franklin, The Franklin Institute is a renowned and innovative leader in the field of science and technology learning, as well as a dynamic center of activity. It is dedicated to creating a passion for science by offering new and exciting access to science and technology in ways that would dazzle and delight its namesake. For more information, please visit www.fi.edu.

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