

# Rocket Competition A Launchpad For Local Students Aspiring To High-Tech Careers

*Annual challenge sparks passion for science and technology among student teams nationwide*

(NAPSA)—Since the Wright brothers' first flight in 1903, some of the country's most accomplished aerospace engineers, mathematicians and scientists have had their first brush with technological innovation right in their own backyards, schools, garages and basements. Today, that tradition continues.

More than 725 student teams representing 44 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands are competing in the 2014 Team America Rocketry Challenge (TARC). TARC is the world's largest student rocket contest and an important part of a national strategy to spark interest in aerospace and defense careers.

Sponsored by the Aerospace Industries Association (AIA), the National Association of Rocketry and more than 20 industry partners, the contest aims to boost U.S. student engagement with science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Now in its 12th year, the contest attracts approximately 5,000 competitors from across the nation who design, build and fly model rockets based on guidelines updated annually to challenge returning teams.

This year, teams have been tasked with building a rocket that can safely carry two raw eggs to an altitude of 825 feet (roughly the height of the Time Warner building in New York City) and land within 48–50 seconds.

Scores are determined by how well the rockets perform against the height and time requirements; damaged eggs disqualify the flight. TARC poses a different challenge each year, and 2014's dual-parachute requirement combined with the tight timing window and other structural criteria make this contest the most difficult in competition history.

“The TARC competition is not only about building the best rocket, it's about sparking a lifelong interest in joining a science and technology workforce that is the foundation of a strong American aerospace and defense indus-



**This challenging competition engages students' STEM-focused skill sets.**

try,” said AIA President and CEO Marion C. Blakey. “Whether you are from a small town or a big city, the opportunities for students with the right combination of technological aptitude and scientific curiosity are sky high.”

This year's diverse student cohort includes several teams that are utilizing 3-D printers to develop rocket components, and a team from Alaska that has spent the winter launching test flights in subzero temperatures. The program has also experienced a growth in female participation over the past year, and several all-girl teams are vying for the chance to compete in the national finals.

The top 100 teams are chosen based on their qualifying flight scores. Those in the top 100 will advance to the National Finals in May at Great Meadow in The Plains, Va.

Participants compete for scholarships and prizes totaling \$60,000 as well as bragging rights for winning the world's largest student rocketry competition. The winning team will travel to the Farnborough International Airshow this summer courtesy of the Raytheon Company to compete in the International Rocketry Challenge. The American team will face off against teams from France and the U.K. in the hopes of defending the international championship won last year by a U.S. team from Georgetown, Texas. For more information about TARC 2014, please visit [www.rocketcontest.org](http://www.rocketcontest.org).