



Questions and Answers

June 22nd, 2015 Town Hall Meeting

Events

- How many teams at each district event?
 - Each District event will accommodate no more than 40 teams and every attempt will be made to have events as close to the 40 team number as possible.
- Will we have any international teams at the district events? If so, where will they be worked into the schedule?
 - FIRST has not yet established guidelines for international teams to participate in District events.
- Please speak to how you are going to address the extra travel costs to the non-NOVA/MD/DC teams. Is there going to be priority set for filling events based on geography? Those outside of the aforementioned region will have to travel at least twice before Worlds. This is a very large burden to place on smaller teams.
 - The Steering Committee is evaluating the option to assign a "home" event to each team similar to what FIRST in Michigan has implemented. That model does add a level of complication to the registration process. At minimum, the planning committees will have the ability to hold spots similar to what is done currently with Regional events to make sure teams are able to go to their local event. If funding levels allow, there may be the ability for teams to apply for grants. The priority is to acquire the equipment necessary to put on quality events. Extra funding will hopefully be available to support teams burdened by the new model.
- How was the \$41k district event cost arrived at? Do the event budgets include professional event management services, e.g. those from ShowReady Events?
 - The budget per event has been established based on estimated costs including but not limited to the following: Facility Rental, Field Equipment including carpets and tape, Audio Visual, AV Crew, DJ, Equipment/Crew, Catering, Event Management, Generator/Cables, Pipe Drape, Floor Covering, Radios, Tables/Chairs, EMT, Janitorial, PODs, consumables, Transportation and Signage
 - Depending on the venue, a small stipend has been budgeted for event management. ShowReady Events will not be involved in district events, but will support our District Championship.
- Will these smaller district events effect the way that the games are structured? such as the alliances
 - Currently, the alliance structure is the same as at Regional Event. Eight Alliances playing til one champion is crowned.
- How many teams will be at the District Championship?
 - There will be 55-60 teams at the 2016 District Championship. The exact number is being evaluated by the Steering Committee based on the amount of space available as well as the affect on rankings for qualification to the FIRST Championship. The final number will be made available as soon as it is finalized.

- Do you know the qualification system is for the District Championship?
 - Yes. The point system by which teams qualify for the District Championship is managed by FIRST. The 2015 system is available in Section 7.4 of the Administrative Manual found here: http://www.usfirst.org/sites/default/files/uploadedFiles/Robotics_Programs/FRC/Game_and_Season_Info/2015/AdminManual20150407.pdf
- Are you required to do two district events?
 - No one is required to compete at two events though the registration fee paid to FIRST would not decrease if you chose to do so. The team would also be at a big disadvantage in advancement points for the season.
- Will the Championship location rotate to other locations year to year?
 - There are a lot of factors that go into deciding the location of the District Championship including the availability of the venue on the dates required, travel distance for teams, hotel availability and cost, as well as sponsor relationships. Beyond that, costs of venue rentals as well as service costs at each venue have to be evaluated. As presented during the first webcast, the cost of the three Regional sites within FIRST Chesapeake ranges from \$140k - \$260k. The XFINITY Center at the University of Maryland was the only Regional site available for week 6 in 2016. We will continue to evaluate all the factors above to determine the best site for the District Championship going forward.
- Why are the projected costs of the FIRST Chesapeake events much higher than those of MAR?
 - Each District operates in slightly different ways and establishes different goals for the execution of their events. The costs per event are lower in MAR and Michigan but higher in the Northeast. For the implementation year, FIRST Chesapeake has decided to utilize the services of AV companies to help put on quality events. Those costs help drive the cost per event higher. The \$41k presented also includes some of the capital and specific operation expenses allocation per event necessary to implement the model. Other Districts have already accounted for those costs in their first year and now have minimal recurring costs. We expect the same to occur once the large capital expenses have been fulfilled.
- How will locations for additional district events in the future be determined?
 - Lots of factors will go into determining the locations for new District Events. Providing easier access to local events for existing teams will remain a priority. Adding events in potential growth areas is another. With any of these goals, a locations that fits the set criteria at the right price and with the right availability will continue to be a base requirement. Teams will continue to be welcome to submit potential sites that will be evaluated on a continuous basis.

Volunteers

- Will we still be signing up for positions through the VIMS program?
 - Yes, VIMS will continue to be utilized for all volunteer registration.
- Will the FRC MC/GAs in the district still be tied into the training program and weekly feedback with Blair and FIRST in NH?
 - Volunteer training and support for key roles will continue to be supported by FIRST headquarters. For some positions, a new "Senior" lead will be identified within the region to provide training and consistency across the region. Thus far, those will be LRI, Head Ref, Judge Advisor and Field Manager.

Organization

- If consistency between events has been identified a key to the success of the district competition structure, why is top-level planning split across 2 independent committees?
 - The Steering Committee provides oversight and guidance to both planning committees in the FIRST Chesapeake District. These planning committees are not independent, but they are based on geography. Representatives from both Maryland and DC will plan and execute the 3 district events planned within those areas. Virginia has its own committee to plan and execute the 4 district events within that state. The Maryland / DC and Virginia committees will collaborate on the District Championship with guidance from the Steering Committee. The goal is to lower the burden of one committee putting on 7 events by splitting the responsibility among the two geographical committees.
- What steps have already been taken to found Chesapeake FIRST as a new tax-exempt public charity?
 - The current focus of the Steering Committee is to plan and implement district events for the upcoming season. Eventually, the Board of Directors of VirginiaFIRST will determine if a new 501c3 will need to be established or potential re-branding will be done with VirginiaFIRST. Until that happens, VirginiaFIRST will be the contracted partner for FRC in Virginia, Maryland and D.C. with FIRST and will act as fiduciary agent.
- Will VirginiaFIRST continue to operate as our affiliate partner for FTC, or will the region's FTC be reorganized into Chesapeake FIRST as well? If Chesapeake FIRST takes over the management of FTC in the region, will VirginiaFIRST be dissolved as an independent organization, or will it be made a subordinate organization under Chesapeake FIRST, or will some other action be taken?
 - VirginiaFIRST will continue to operate as our affiliate partner for FTC. James Madison University will continue as our FLL and Jr.FLL operating partner for VA and DC. STEMaction will continue as our FTC and Jr.FLL partner in MD. The University of Maryland Baltimore County will continue as our FLL partner for MD. There are no plans to dissolve VirginiaFIRST.
- Why did the presenters stress that local groups would NOT be responsible for event operations? Does it not make sense for the district planning committees to leverage, as much as possible, the local intelligence of the areas where districts will be run?
 - All district events will be executed by one of the two planning committee. We plan to leverage, as much as possible, the local intelligence of the areas where districts will be run under the direction of the planning committee. The goal is to maintain a level of quality as set by the Steering Committee, reduce duplication of effort to execute events, and not add event responsibilities to teams.
- How will Chesapeake FIRST justify the continued funding of three RD positions into the long term (i.e. after the 1-year transitional support from FIRST has ended)?
 - Currently, VirginiaFIRST funds the full time RD position in Virginia, and FIRST funds two part-time RD positions in MD and DC through the first year of the district implementation. As with other districts, long term staffing roles and decisions will be made as appropriate based on the needs of the organization. The RDs will take on different responsibilities including the execution of the multiple district events in their area as well as continue to support the growth and sustainability of the teams.
- I believe it was Denise Lewis who mentioned, in reference to acquisition planning, that FIRST Chesapeake is "initially going to borrow our field; at some point we are planning to purchase our own equipment..." Does this mean that the \$130-170k allocated to the first-year capital outlay does NOT include purchase of the two playing field borders?
 - The \$130-170k does not include field borders. That number includes road cases for extra equipment, pipe and drape, carpets for each event, referee equipment, robot inspection

equipment, pit admin equipment, judging equipment, tools for the field, safety glasses, signage, and volunteer management equipment. All of these items are needed to execute a high quality event.