

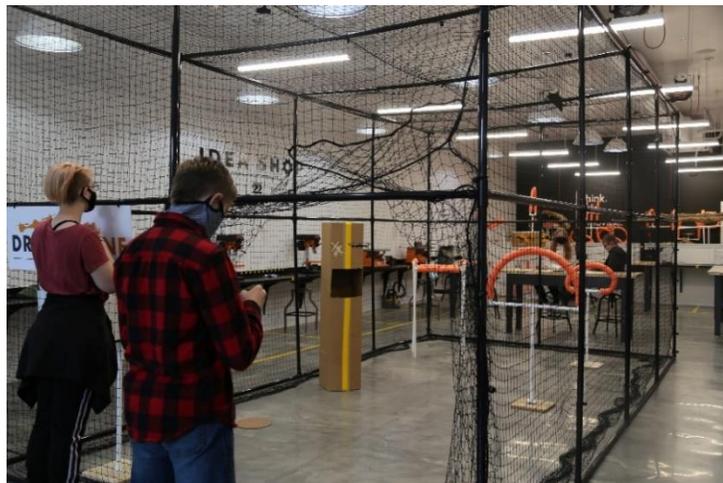
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Regional Pitsco drone competition sends student engagement soaring

PITTSBURG, KS (May 17, 2021) – Students from area schools conjured up creative real-world scenarios in an aerial drone competition that tested not only their technical skills but also their teamwork and other soft skills. Nine schools entered teams into the weeks-long competition that culminated in a final showdown on Thursday, May 6, at The Pitsco Idea Shop in Pittsburg, Kansas.

A main component of the multifaceted competition involved piloting the Tello EDU Drone available from Pitsco Education. Time trials tested the students' precise navigation of obstacle courses by remote control. Teamwork came into play as a pilot's teammates ran along the perimeter of the drone arena to serve as additional sets of eyes and ears.



An engineering and storytelling component played a large role as well; the obstacle courses used were actually designed by the student teams. Each team submitted one course design that included a technical drawing to illustrate the layout. They also constructed the obstacles from pieces provided in Pitsco's Drone Industry Field Elements Kit. The scenarios students devised ran the gamut from a rescue operation in a burning building to an outer space reconnaissance mission to identify alien life.

Ultimately the Stingers, a middle school team from Fredonia, Kansas, took the top spot in the competition. Their piloting prowess paired with their cool course concept gave them the win. Their obstacle course scenario centered on a San Francisco man who finds himself trapped in rubble after an earthquake and must send out a drone through narrow passages to find help.

The winners did not go home empty-handed. Each member of the Stingers received their own HOBBYTIGER H301S Ranger GPS Drone.

Drones have become increasingly common in workplaces and consequently are a hot item in STEM classrooms across the country. For this reason, Pitsco’s drone curricula and competitions lean heavily into the real-world aspects.

“Students who go through our curriculum have the advantage of understanding the use and application of drones in various career fields,” said Pitsco Curriculum Writer David Meador. “They are able to realize that drones can apply to many career situations. As they get that instruction, they also have the opportunity to practice real-world scenarios and fly drone missions, accomplishing tasks required of a drone pilot in different career areas.”

Students certainly take note of the career connections, but sheer enjoyment is front and center. Payton, a middle school student on the Fort Scott, Kansas, team, explains the appeal of drones. “When you read a book, it takes you off in your own world. Flying a drone is the same. I love watching them fly. It blows my mind.”

Whether it is career relevancy or fun at the heart of drones’ appeal, teachers have taken notice. “They thank me all the time for this,” said teacher Regina Thompson, coach of Fredonia’s team. “I say, ‘You guys are doing all the work!’ They love it. They are excited about coming here and doing this.”

The Pitsco Idea Shop is a collaborative enterprise undertaken in a partnership between Pitsco Education and Pittsburg State University as part of Pittsburg’s Block22 project.

Highlights/Multimedia:

- [Click to Tweet](#): A hot item in STEM classrooms across the country, drones take center stage at regional @pitscoed and @pittstate competition. @Block22PSU [Pitsco.com/Shop/Drones](https://pitsco.com/Shop/Drones)
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