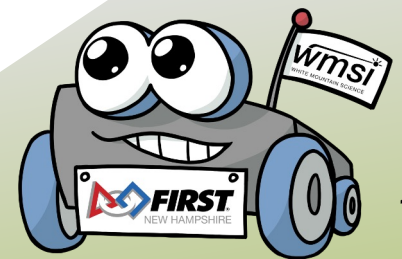


North Country CEDS Committee Meeting

April 19, 2024



Who We Are

- FIRST NH is a 501c3 non-profit that implements the FIRST robotics programs for students in grades K-12
 - Ken St.Hilaire – Director FIRST New Hampshire – Active in FIRST since 2011
 - Frank Grossman – FIRST New Hampshire President – Active in FIRST for 20+ years, also serves on New England FIRST Board of Directors
- FIRST is a global robotics organization established in 1989 by Dean Kamen and headquartered in Manchester, NH
- FIRST NH “North Country Project” created in 2020 with grant from NBRC, with matching funds received from Neil & Louise Tillotson Fund and the BOSCH Community Fund



North Country Project Overview

- Initial focus was on SAU 36 and SAU 84 to strengthen existing, yet struggling programs in these districts.
- Introduced new programs to Gorham, Stewartstown, Colebrook, Berlin, among others
- Some stats:
 - 49 teams in Coos and Grafton counties, up from 13 in 2020
 - 1211 students impacted, up from 146 in 2020
 - 16 schools, up from 8 in 2020
 - 3 public libraries, 4 homeschool groups, up from 0 in 2020



Why It's Important

- Need to increase STEM “equity” in the region, providing same opportunities that students in other parts of the state
 - Rural communities have unique challenges that other, more densely populated areas don't face
- Programs like FIRST are a critical component in any workforce development long-term strategy
 - Prepare students for an ever-increasing technological world, developing practical skills that cannot be taught in the classroom alone
 - Immediate impacts to students in high school, providing pathways to jobs or advanced study
 - Build awareness and skills in the lower grades helping to establish pipeline of students, teachers and mentors in high school and beyond



Why We Are Here

- Initial project will conclude in September 2024, planning next phase to:
 - Continue momentum in Coos and Grafton counties, bringing programs to new communities and continuing to strengthen current programs
 - Expand project to other rural communities in NH, replicating the successful model that we have implemented up north
- Need to continue to build awareness that FIRST programs are a key component in any workforce development strategies:
 - Recognize that developing skills and interest at younger ages is so important
 - Need the students to see themselves in jobs and careers well before they graduate from high school



Questions?

