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***FIRST*[®] and Society of Women Engineers Form Strategic Alliance**

*FIRST and Society of Women Engineers (SWE) Join Forces
To Answer Critical Need for Engineers, Scientists and Technologists*

MANCHESTER, N.H., and CHICAGO, December 10, 2009 — [FIRST](#)[®] (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology), a not-for-profit organization founded by inventor Dean Kamen to inspire young people's interest and participation in science and technology, today announced an alliance agreement with the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) aimed at increasing the number of middle and high-school students choosing to pursue careers in science and technology. The agreement establishes a framework for *FIRST* and SWE to jointly participate in each organization's programs and promote an active interest in science and technology among school-age students.

The alliance will allow *FIRST* and SWE to engage their affiliates in business, education and higher education to increase awareness and enrollment of student programs in science and technology. In addition to increasing participation in science and technology among young people, the agreement emphasizes the primary goal of increasing the number girls participating in *FIRST* robotics competitions.

"The recruitment, retention and upward mobility of women engineers continues to be at the core of SWE's programs and efforts," said Nora Lin, president of the Society of Women Engineers (SWE). "SWE has a rich history of outreach to young girls and women, encouraging them to pursue technical careers. We see our Strategic Alliance with *FIRST* as another important step toward fulfilling our goal of increasing and sustaining opportunities for women in engineering and the sciences."

"There is a critical need for well-trained, qualified engineers, scientists and technical specialists to meet the growing demand for a scientific and technical workforce," said Paul R. Gudonis, president of *FIRST*. "While *FIRST* initiates a love of science and technology among young people, our partnership with SWE can provide our female students with unique professional guidance from the female perspective and direct young women to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and math."

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About SWE

The Society of Women Engineers (SWE), founded in 1950, is a not-for-profit educational and service organization. SWE is the driving force that establishes engineering as a highly desirable career aspiration for women. SWE empowers women to succeed and advance in those aspirations and receive the recognition and credit for their life-changing contributions and achievements as engineers and leaders. For more information about the Society please contact Brian Knier at (312) 596-5223 or visit www.swe.org.

About FIRST[®]

Accomplished inventor Dean Kamen founded *FIRST* (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) in 1989 to inspire an appreciation of science and technology in young people. Based in Manchester, N.H., *FIRST* designs accessible, innovative programs to build self-confidence, knowledge, and life skills while motivating young people to pursue opportunities in science, technology, and engineering. With the support of many of the world's most well-known companies, the not-for-profit organization hosts the *FIRST*[®] Robotics Competition (FRC™) and *FIRST*[®] Tech Challenge (FTC[®]) for high-school students, *FIRST*[®] LEGO[®] League (FLL) for children 9-14 years old, and Junior *FIRST*[®] LEGO[®] League (Jr.FLL) for 6 to 9 year-olds. To learn more about *FIRST*, go to www.usfirst.org.

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