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NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Solano County Office of Education Phoenix Spark Challenge Students' Upcoming Visit to Travis Air Force Base

High School students from Solano County will visit Travis Air Force Base (TAFB) on Friday, March 2nd, to participate in the next phase of the Phoenix Spark Challenge hosted by the Solano County Office of Education and Travis Air Force Base. TAFB Airmen will give the students a tour of the base and show them three genuine issues that the consumer sector and the Department of Defense are currently trying to solve. Students will have a chance to ask questions and will then choose which of the three challenges they want to work to resolve. “We are very excited about this opportunity for high school teams to compete in such an inspiring event. Solving real-life problems is an excellent way to get students engaged in math and science while learning the valuable 21st Century skills necessary to prepare for the jobs of today and the future,” says Lisette Estrella-Henderson, Solano County Superintendent of Schools. “We are very thankful for our partnership with the Travis Air Force Base Phoenix Spark Innovation program for helping students to develop these valuable skills, such as collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking, that will serve them well throughout their lives.”

The three challenges are as follows:

1. Airfield Lighting Check: Design a system that saves time by remotely and wirelessly checking the lighting on the runway;
2. County-Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS): Design a system that can deny UAS (commonly known as drones) entry into airspace;
3. Self-Driving Bus: Design a driverless transportation vehicle capable of carrying 15-20 passengers with luggage from the passenger terminal to the Visitors Center.

Students will be judged on product design and feasibility, cost analysis to include initial startup costs, and one-, five-, and ten-year long-term analysis. Students will also be required to present a 3-5-minute presentation along with visual aids.

The goals of the Phoenix Spark Challenge are to provide students with fun, interesting, and challenging real-world problems to solve; introduce a challenge that advances both the high school's academic goals

and Travis AFB's mission; and to tap into a pool of innovators that can bring a novel solution and perspective to the issues being presented in the challenge.

Concepts are infused throughout the competition to advance student skill levels in science, technology, engineering, and math. Through this challenge, students gain an understanding of the principles of teamwork, communication, and problem-solving. Each student has an opportunity to work as a team member and present work in a forum that is modeled after workplace practices. The final competition will be held on Thursday, May 10th.

For more information, please contact Gillie Miller at GMiller@Solanocoe.net or 707-372-8603.

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