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NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

High School students from Solano County visited Travis Air Force Base (TAFB) on Thursday, May 10th, to participate in the Phoenix Spark Challenge hosted by the Solano County Office of Education and Travis Air Force Base. Students competed in three areas identified as genuine issues that the consumer sector and the Department of Defense are currently trying to solve. “The Solano County Office of Education is grateful for this partnership with Travis Air Force Base. This is an amazing opportunity for the youth of Solano County to demonstrate the critical knowledge and skills in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) that are needed in the workplaces of today and also of the future,” says Solano County Superintendent of Schools, Lisette Estrella-Henderson.

The three challenges were 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 were judged on product design and feasibility; cost analysis to include initial startup costs; and one-, five-, and ten-year long-term analysis. Students were also 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 (STEM). Through this challenge, students gain an understanding of the principles of teamwork, communication, and problem-solving.

Award money was raised through donations to the Solano Economic Development Corporation.

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

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