**Local team participates in *FIRST* Robotics Kick-Off**

This weekend, Port Townsend’s local high school age 4-H robotics team, participated in a *FIRST* Robotics Competition (FRC) Kick-Off event at Auburn High School. At this event, hosted by FRC Team 3219, the 2018 challenge was released and this officially started the Roboctopi’s six week build season. FRC teams from around Western Washington attended to view the live stream challenge release and then participated in team strategy sessions.

Tyler Nelson, a Port Townsend High School freshman, attended the Kick-Off with the Roboctopi.  “Being my first year on the team, Kick-Off was quite the event. After seeing the game and what it entails, it will definitely be more challenging than I originally thought.”

This year’s challenge, *FIRST* POWER UP, transports teams into the world of Arcade Games. High school students from around the world design washing machine sized robots that interact with game elements, complete tasks and climb obstacles during two and half minute matches. Students learn skills like programming, mechanical design, business planning and teamwork.

"As the FIRST website says, it's the 'hardest fun you'll ever have,’ and frankly, I couldn't agree more," said Max Morningstar, who is the president of the Roboctopi, and a junior at West Sound Academy.

The Roboctopi is celebrating their fifth year in the *FIRST* Robotics Competition. They have experienced many successes as a team, the greatest of which was attending the *FIRST* World Championships in 2014 and again in 2017.

Raphael Bakin, a junior at Port Townsend High School, has participated on the Roboctopi for three years. “This year promises to be a very interesting challenge and I look forward to seeing how our team overcomes it.”

This year, the Roboctopi team is made up of twelve students that are aiming for another successful season.

Ella Ashford, a junior and the Vice President of the Roboctopi, has participated in FIRST programs for seven years. She understands the importance of funding robotics programs in Jefferson County. “FIRST Robotics teaches a skill set that every student should have access to, especially in small communities like Port Townsend. The Roboctopi has been able to keep up with bigger and better funded teams in the past because of the dedication of students, mentors and our community.”

The team is actively seeking sponsorship to support their 2018 competition season.

Please visit the Roboctopi facebook page for more information: [*facebook.com/roboctopi*](http://facebook.com/roboctopi)