Bluebotic Plague going to state competition

Hibbing Lego Robotics team continues long tradition of success by qualifying for February event

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HIBBING — The Hibbing School District is set to send the “The Bluebotic Plague" to St. Paul at the end of February.

And that’s a good thing. The Bluebotic Plague is the name of the school’s Lego Robotics team, which is headed to the state tournament at the Washington Technology Magnet School on Feb. 26 to take on about 30 of the best teams in Minnesota in the state Lego Robotics Tournament.

This is the fourth time in team history that Hibbing has qualified for the event, said Lego Robotics Advisor and Hibbing High School science teacher Shanna Eskeli.

Bluebotic Plague, which is made up of 10 students aged 9 to 14, competed at the regional tournament in early December.

“Our division is for students ages 9-14. We choose to have students in grades 7-9 because it works best for Hibbing High School. We do offer FIRST Robotics for grades 9-12 at Hibbing High School, which is recognized at the state level by the Minnesota State High School League.” Eskeli said. “In our division, we compete in First Lego League (https://www.firstinspires.org/) throughout the world. FIRST offers robotics programs for students in grades K-12. “Our division is for students ages 9-14. We choose to have students in grades 7-9 because it works best for Hibbing High School. We do offer FIRST Robotics for grades 9-12 at Hibbing High School, which is recognized at the state level by the Minnesota State High School League.” Eskeli said. “In our division, we compete in First Lego League (https://www.firstinspires.org/) throughout the world. FIRST offers robotics programs for students in grades K-12.

Eskeli said the team is “very happy” to be going to the state tournament. “Regions are a one and done competition, which can be very challenging. We work hard for three months and get one day to compete. If you don’t perform well on that day, your season is done,” Eskeli said.

The regular season starts in late August and regional competitions begin in late November and early December. Robotics competitions are run through an organization called, FIRST (https://www.firstinspires.org/) throughout the world. FIRST offers robotics programs for students in grades K-12.

“On behalf of the Hibbing Lego Robotics Team, we want to thank our sponsors, Hibbing High School and the Hibbing School Board of Education. We also want to thank our parents for their support and our coach Shanna Eskeli. Thank you. (Shanna Eskeli)

The sun makes a brief appearance over Virginia after breaking through heavy cloud cover Tuesday afternoon. Tuesday was the shortest day of the year marking the official start of winter with the sun up for only eight hours and twenty six minutes.

Lake Country Power electric rates to go up in March

Inflation, supply chain issues driving increased materials costs

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Lake Country Power's electric rates will increase in March.

The rural electric cooperative will increase its general service rate by 1.67 cents per kilowatt hour effective March 1, 2022, according to Mark Bakk, Lake Country Power general manager.

The increase amounts to about a $10 to $16 per month increase for customers who use between 600 and 1,000 kilowatt hours per month, he said.

“The driver of it is largely inflation and the supply chain,” Bakk said. “In the last year-and-a-half the materials we are buying are up 30 percent and sometime to get worse. What we're hearing from our vendors and suppliers is that it's expected to get worse and that's concerning.”

Members won’t see the increase on their electric bills until April. The rate for dual fuel customers also won't change until March 1, Bakk said. Keeping the current dual fuel rate in place will help members get through the winter without increased heating costs, he said.

Dependent on the sale of Great River Energy's Coal Creek Station generating facility in North Dakota, dual fuel rates would have three-tenths of a cent per kilowatt hour in March, Bakk said. Great River En- ergy supplies electricity to Lake Country Power.

The nine-member Lake Country Power board of directors grappling with approving a general rate increase, but is faced with generating enough revenue to

CIRSSD board approves rate increase

MARIE TOLONEN
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BUHL — The Central Iron Range Sanitary Sewer District (CIRSSD) is experiencing the effects of inflation, and recently announced rate changes for operations and maintenance charges to its member communities are being adjusted as a result.

“As with everyone else on the Range, the CIRSSD has been hit with the effects of record inflation on costs for equipment, chemicals, supplies, materials, and shipping,” CIRSSD Executive Director Norm Miranda wrote in a press release. “In 2021, we anticipate further significant cost increases with Minnesota Power's 14 percent increase, as well as labor and further increases on chemicals, supplies and materials.”

Miranda said the CIRSSD provides conveyance of wastewater to its member communities of Chisholm, Buhl, Kimberly and Great Scott Township and that the increase amounts to about a $10 to $16 per month increase for customers who use between 600 and 1,000 kilowatt hours per month, he said.

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