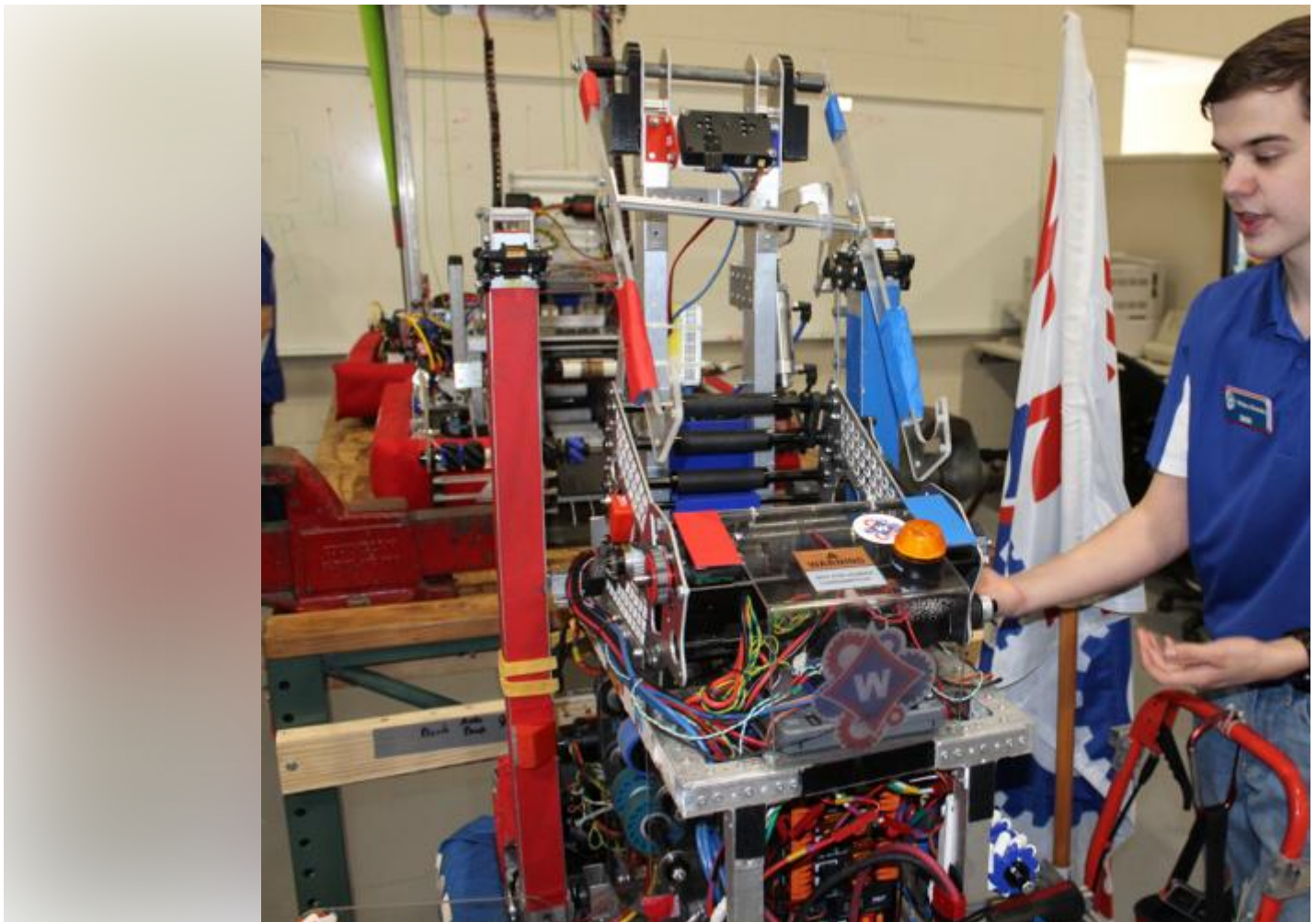


[https://www.mdjonline.com/news/education/walton-shows-off-new-robotics-lab/article\\_1f5f18d2-5ae3-11ed-98b1-4fdd215b2530.html](https://www.mdjonline.com/news/education/walton-shows-off-new-robotics-lab/article_1f5f18d2-5ae3-11ed-98b1-4fdd215b2530.html)

## Walton shows off new robotics lab

By Hunter Riggall [hriggall@mdjonline.com](mailto:hriggall@mdjonline.com)

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Zach Evans, a junior at Walton High, speaks about a robot at an open house for the school's new robotics lab in east Cobb. Hunter Riggall

EAST COBB — Walton High School's robotics team showed off its new robotics lab with an open house Wednesday, housed in an old practice gym behind the school, near football stadium.

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The Cobb County Board of Education approved using \$300,000 in special 1% sales tax revenue to build the lab last July.

The robotics team, 44 students strong, moved into the facility last September. It is complete with a full robotics field, and a plethora of clamps, saws, drills, work benches, desks, computers, electronic parts, batteries, lumber and sheet metal.

Walton blue banners are draped from the walls commemorating the many awards the program has earned since its inception in 2009.

There are only four other comparable labs in the state, according to robotics coach and engineering teacher Brian Benton. The team operated out of a shoe store when it was founded and has moved regularly — the new lab is the program's seventh, and hopefully final, home base.

All students on the team are trained to use tools such as drills, saws and measuring instruments. Some work more on the engineering side, using mechanisms and motors to build a robot's chassis. Others are coders, using computer programming to make the robot complete a task. There's also the presentation team, who use public speaking to present the work to sponsors, community groups and judges at competitions. There are even students who manage social media.

“You don’t have to be an engineer. I’ve heard ‘I’m not a robotics kid’ ... we’ve got spaces for everybody,” said physics teacher and coach Dana Evans.

Anish Sankuratri, a senior at Walton, considers himself a jack of all trades. He works with the build team to create the bones of the robot, but also serves as a bridge between the builders and the programmers, and contributes to the team that handles community outreach.

He hopes to study aerospace engineering in college, having grown up fascinated with planes, rockets, “Top Gun” and movies about the Apollo program.

“The connections and everything you make in robotics, first of all, you get a lot of great friends here,” Sankuratri said. “I’m friends with almost everybody on the team. And second, you meet a lot of cool people. I was at state last year, and I met the director of hiring at Warner Robins Air Force Base. ... I met the CEO of GeorgiaFIRST, the company that oversees all robotics in Georgia. So it’s the connections you make, the people you see, and the people you’re friends with.”



Walton High seniors Oscar Chen, left, and Armand Juston, center, demonstrate a student-made robot for Cobb school board member Randy Scamihorn.  
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Walton robotics coaches Brian Benton and Dana Evans speak at an open house for the school's new robotics lab in east Cobb on Wednesday.  
Hunter Riggall

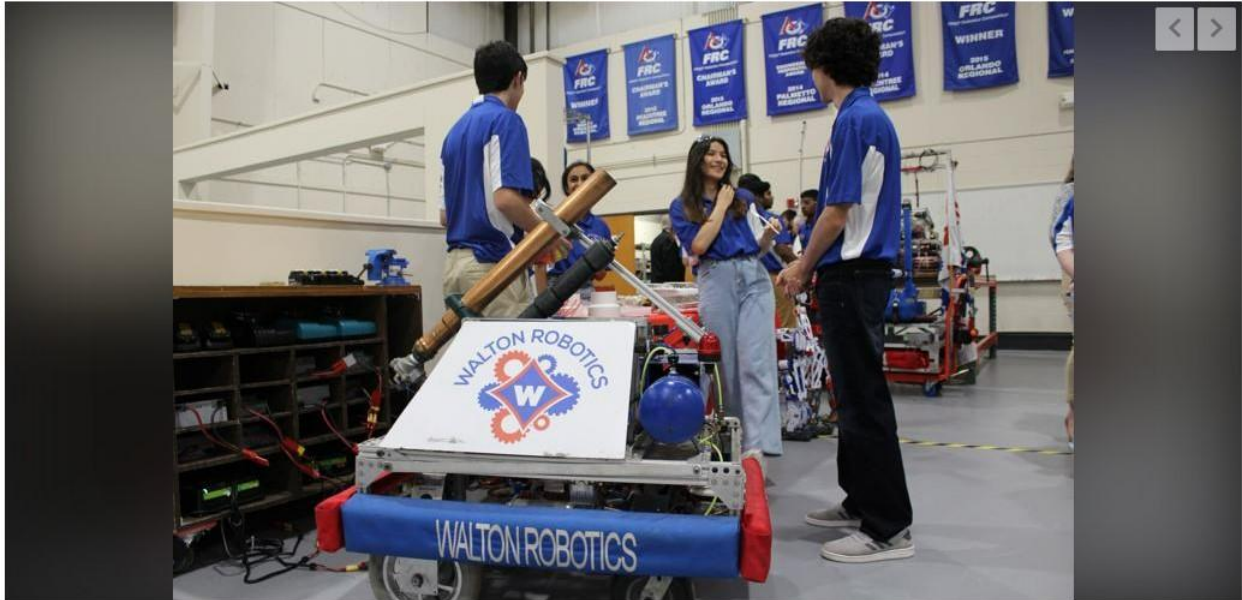


Oscar Chen, left, and Parsa Novin, both seniors at Walton High School, demonstrate student-made robotics at an open house for the school's new robotics lab Wednesday.  
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Anish Sankuratri, a senior at Walton High, speaks at an open house for the school's new robotics lab Wednesday.  
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Walton High School's robotics team held an open house to show off its new lab at the school Wednesday.

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Pictured is a cutout of Walt, the mascot for the Walton High robotics team, at an open house for the new robotics lab Wednesday. The lab's walls are hung with banners commemorating awards the program has received.

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