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Students Matthew Berk and Sam Miller, mentored by Aurora Flight Sciences' Mississippi staff, compete in the annual *Team America Rocketry Challenge* nationwide competition.

Student Mentoring Rockets to New Heights in Mississippi

Columbus, MS-May 13, 2008- Aurora Flight Sciences announced today that three corporate-mentored teams were selected as finalists in the *Team America Rocketry Challenge*.

Each year, the annual competition builds excitement for thousands of middle and high school students eager to showcase their rocket-building skills and talents. But this year's annual competition is especially exciting for the employees of Aurora Flight Sciences' Mississippi facility as well. "I am thrilled to report that for the first time ever, we have students from Mississippi in the finals AND not just one team but THREE", states John Langford, President and CEO of Aurora.

The Mississippi finalists were among 7,000 students and 643 teams who competed in the qualifying rounds of the competition. The contestants were presented with a dual challenge of launching their rockets as close as possible to an altitude of 750 feet with a flight time of 45 seconds. The payload of two raw eggs had to return to the ground unbroken. Teams had until April 7 to submit qualifying scores, which were achieved by launching the rocket in their home region under the supervision of a judge from the National Association of Rocketry, AIA's co-sponsor of the contest.

The three Mississippi team finalists mentored and lead by Greg Stewart, General Manager of Aurora's Mississippi Manufacturing Operations and staff, includes:

- A team of 5 students from the Mississippi School of Math and Sciences in Columbus. Led by physics teacher Ken Wester, this team was Mississippi's only team to post successful flights last year, and this year elevated their performance to the finalist level.
- A team of 3 students from the Christian Home School of Starkville. Led by Scott Hunt, another Aurora Mississippi employee, this team includes a 15 year-old student who recently soloed in a full-sized sailplane and qualified to fly model rockets in Spain for the US World Spacemodeling team.
- A team of 15 students from the Monroe County Advanced Learning Center. Led by science and physics teacher Ester Potts, Aurora connected with this team less than a week before the qualifications and provided assistance and sponsorship to help them qualify.

"Our Aurora team mentors get tremendous satisfaction from the fact that we are helping students find ways of identifying and connecting their interests," says Greg Stewart.

Mentorship of the competing students has been nothing less than rewarding and an honor for Aurora Mississippi employees. "Building excitement about science and engineering among young people is vital to the nation's long-term aerospace health and competitiveness," adds Langford.

The top 100 teams will compete on Saturday, May 17th in The Plains, Virginia for a chance to win \$60,000 in scholarships and prizes. The winning teams will also receive a corporate-sponsored trip to the Farnborough International Airshow in London in July, and a chance to participate in NASA's advanced rocketry competition.

About Aurora Flight Sciences

Aurora Flight Sciences designs and builds robotic aircraft and other advanced aerospace vehicles for scientific and military applications. Aurora is headquartered in Manassas, VA and operates production plants in Clarksburg, WV and Columbus, MS and a Research and Development Center in Cambridge, MA. To view recent press releases and more about Aurora please visit our web site at www.aurora.aero.

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