



**NEW SOLON BUSINESSES REVVING UP FOR THE HOLIDAYS**

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# SOLON ECONOMIST

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Chris Umscheid • Staff Photos

Solon alliance Team 367 Salad (Ian Ressler, Jack Rekers, and Ryan Bilskie) and Team 20349 Chaotic Good (Rene' Meza, Paige White, and Mackenna Kramer) put their robots through their paces in competition Thursday, Nov. 17 at the Solon Community Center.

## Robots rise up!

### Solon Robotics compete in home meet

By Chris Umscheid  
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SOLON — Solon's Robotics program competed in a home tournament Thursday, Nov. 17 at the Solon Community Center. The program started in 2007 but did not participate in 2008. Bill Mattaliano started coaching the club in 2009 with three students participating.

Since then the popularity has increased with 34 Solon students participating in two programs: First Tech Challenge and VEX.

First Tech Challenge, for grades 7-12, challenges students to design, build, program, and operate robots in head-to-head competition under the guidance of adult coaches and mentors. The students develop STEM (Science,

Technology, Engineering, and Math) skills while practicing engineering principles and realizing the value of hard work, innovation, and teamwork. VEX offers programs from pre-K through high school with educational robotics.

This year's competition challenged the Robotics students to design and build robots that would pick up a plastic cup with a hole in the bottom, raise it up over a shaft, and drop it down onto the shaft. Operating the robots is a team effort requiring careful coordination while attempting to complete tasks.

"This is not 'Battle Bots,' stressed Mattaliano. "We are competing for points, not trying to destroy other robots." Indeed, part of the competition

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Toby Kleinsmith, Haeley Ball, and Abby Kramer (team Four Horsemen) go through inspection Thursday, Nov. 17 before competing in a robotics tournament. Not pictured — Sophia Miles.

## 26th annual DVIP Holiday Drive starts Friday

By Solon Economist

TIFFIN — For the 26th year, retired police officer Juan Santiago is seeking donations for his annual DVIP (Domestic Violence Intervention Program) Holiday Drive, which asks for non-violence-oriented toys, new or slightly used toys, and cash donations or gift cards for teens.

"I've been doing this because in my youth, I was one of those kids living in domestic violence situations during the holidays and rarely got anything. I swore to myself as an adult I would try to help families in those situations as much as possible."

The drive starts Friday, Nov. 25 and runs through Thursday, Dec. 22 with drop off locations at the Johnson County Sheriff's Office and North Liberty Police Department, Lotus

Salon & Spa in Coralville, Dodge Street Tires in Iowa City, SYNcerc Printing in Tiffin, and New Leaf Wellness Center in Coralville. As of press time, other locations were pending.

The DVIP, in Iowa City, provides free and confidential services to Cedar, Des Moines, Henry, Iowa, Johnson, Lee, Van Buren, and Washington Counties. DVIP can be reached at 1-800-373-1043 with the promise of safety and dignity, always, for people needing a way out of domestic violence situation. For additional information about DVIP, and how to help the program, go to <https://dvipiowa.org>.

For more information about the Holiday Drive, contact Juan Santiago, 319-430-2388 or [syncereprinting@yahoo.com](mailto:syncereprinting@yahoo.com).

## Solon CSD receives awards at IASB annual convention

### Education leaders recognized for commitment to learning and leadership

DES MOINES — The Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB) presented the 2021-2022 Annual Board Awards Nov. 17 during the IASB annual convention in Des Moines. The awards are

given each year to board members, board teams, and superintendents/AEA chief administrators who dedicate time and effort to learning, advocacy, leadership, and service projects to expand their knowledge and skills for better governance. Applicants must accumulate a specific number of credits to earn these awards.

Individual awards were presented to 112 board members from 48 PK-12 school boards, four area

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### Weekend weather

Saturday: Partly cloudy. High: 46°/Low: 32° • Sunday: Partly cloudy. High: 44°/Low: 29°

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