By Carolyn Lee
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Chase County Schools high school science teacher Kim Wilson is hoping that more students become involved in subjects she's teaching after hours. Currently, she has five students building robots for competition in January, and two students building an electric car for competition in April.

In the senior high, Suzy Kasselman and Regan Gittlein are building a robot, while in the junior high Brady Gittlein, Cade Francis and Blake Schilke are working on one.

Nebraska Public Power District gave the students a kit from VEX Robotics to get them started, Wilson said. They are to build a robot that will pick up bean bags and place them in a 15 foot long trough on a playing field.

The VEX Robotics-sponsored competition will be held Jan. 12 in Aurora, Neb.

The robots must use all VEX parts, with a maximum of 10 battery-operated motors and a hand-held controller.

There is a long list of requirements the robots must meet before competition.

The students will be working with a team from another school during four or five matches. The teams are then ranked based upon results, and the top eight teams make the final competition.

The winner moves on to state and then national competition.

This is the third year students from CCS have competed. In the 2010-11 year they received an award for best design.

Electric car

Callin Ledall and Cody Cochran are constructing an electric car from a kit, with help from Del Rehn, school bus maintenance personnel. "Del Rehn's been a great help," Wilson noted. The students work on the car at the bus barn every day.

The car must perform steering, braking and mileage tests at competition sponsored by Nebraska Public Power District and Omaha Public Power District. The competitions are held in several eastern Nebraska cities.

Wilson said Imperial Public Power District donated $1,000 toward the project, with individual donations from Sheila Stromberger, Imperial Country Ford, Harchelroad Motors, Car Nutz, Imperial NAPA and Paul Ekberg. Some car parts have also been donated.