SA LAUNCHES FIRST TEXAS CHAPTER OF INTERNATIONAL ROBOTICS NON-PROFIT

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SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS - The first Texas chapter of Women in Robotics (WiR), a global nonprofit for connecting and advancing women in the robotics industry, is launching its latest chapter in San Antonio — solidifying the Alamo City's role as a rapidly growing global robotics innovation hub.

Several founding members of the Women in Robotics San Antonio chapter — including students from Lutheran High School.

Port San Antonio is home to the first U.S.-based operation for Dutch firm XYREC, whose groundbreaking industrial robot — the largest in the world — is revolutionizing the global aerospace industry.

The group will host events, including panels and exhibits, connect women in the industry, oversee industry- and school-based robotics competitions and provide mentoring opportunities.

"Women in Robotics is an international community that will allow our chapter members to connect with other women from around the world who are contributing to advanced robotics work," said Stephanie Garcia, Business Development and Communications Specialist for Port San Antonio who helped establish the new chapter.

"Our chapter aims to inspire the next generation of women pursuing robotics and other STEM-related futures," she added. "We are thrilled we can offer a community that truly bridges the gap between education and industry by inviting people in our region to events where they will have an opportunity to engage and network with members and others who are advancing this exciting industry."

WiR President and Managing Director and founder of Silicon Valley Robotics Andra Keay said she is excited about the rapidly growing San Antonio cluster of robotics companies as well as the new chapter.

"It really speaks to the story that robotics is a growing industry and is not limited to Pittsburgh, Boston and Silicon Valley," Keay said. "It's not just a job for people with PhDs — it's a job for people from every walk of life."

Katie Glasheen, Senior Software Engineer with Renu Robotics, demonstrates the company's Renubot — which is revolutionizing vegetation management for solar energy facilities.

Katie Glasheen, WiR member and Senior Software Engineer for San Antonio-based Renu Robotics, said the new chapter will bolster local industry growth and retention rates for women in robotics.

"Diversity is crucial for a team to creatively solve technical challenges," she said. "The new group will provide visibility to the robotics community in San Antonio, encouraging talented people to come here for great job opportunities. Attracting people of different backgrounds will help the local robotics companies thrive."

"Whenever you see an underprivileged community that doesn't have the same access and the same opportunities, we need to take stock of that and see how we can make it better," said Ivy Vasquez Sandoval, WiR member and Software Engineer at Plus One Robotics, headquartered at Port San Antonio.

"Women in robotics is one area that can use a little boost," she added. "Women aren't working in robotics as commonly as in other fields, so encouraging younger women to get involved in STEM is one step Plus One is taking very seriously."

Sarah Rogers, Southwest Research Institute's manager of the robotics software section for Southwest Research Institute (SwRI), noted that many members of San Antonio's robotics family tree got their start at SwRI —including the founding engineers at Plus One Robotics.

Rogers said the new group will help members mentor and connect women with opportunities that might not have been otherwise accessible.

"It will help women understand that these things are within their reach and offer good role models for girls to see successful women working in technical areas," she said.

Plus One Robotics' award-winning automated robotics solutions are increasing efficiency for an array of logistics and warehouse operations. The company's platform recently reached over half a billion parcel picks globally — which is currently an industry leading metric.