Briefly describe the impact of the FIRST program on team participants with special emphasis on the 2014/2015 year and the preceding two to five years.

The impact of the FIRST program on team participants this year has been growth under pressure. We have retained only the most dedicated and determined team members. With fewer members, there are fewer people to do the same amount of work. Team 342 has risen to the challenge and become more efficient, creative, and skilled. This growth is very evident when we are out in the community working with FLL competitions, STEM festivals, and FRC competitions. We love to see the younger kids get so excited about robotics and the thrill of competition. We still get caught up in the excitement of building our own robot and the gamesmanship at competitions like SCRIW and Palmetto Regionals. At festivals and other events where we are demonstrating robots from previous competitions, we get to show off our specialized skills and knowledge to kids of all ages.

Describe the impact of the FIRST program on your community with special emphasis on the 2014/2105 year and the preceding two to five years.

Team 342 has been working in the community during the 2014/2015 season. We have been at FLL events working with and for the local teams. We have been at festivals like the Charleston STEM Fest, Butts and Wings BBQ festival, and National Honor Society Culture Fest spreading the word about STEM and robotics. We brought a little European culture to our area with Bot-toberfest, a German feast with music, dancing, and a golf tournament. We are active at our school, Fort Dorchester High School, cheering on our sports teams and demonstrating our robotics prowess. We are also active in the schools that feed into FDHS, attending their STEM events and mentoring their robotics teams.

Team's innovative or creative method to spread the FIRST message.

Burnie the Burning Magneto is our vehicle for "taking the message further!" He attends hockey matches, basketball games, car washes, and more. He may even be invited to the prom. He always gets lots of attention from everyone around. Younger kids love to get involved catching Frisbees and balls and even driving the robot. They can't get enough of our metallic ambassador. We have gone global with our Computers to Kenya program. Having evolved into World Class Scholars, this program continues to grow larger and introduce more young minds to the world of STEM. We hope that this will translate to more International teams competing with FIRST.

Describe examples of how your team members act as role models and inspire other FIRST team members to emulate.

At the end of every meeting, all the sub teams gather together to share out what they worked on that night. Each night different team members share and take the lead in communicating what their team members are working on, what is working, and what is not. Different students are able to attend different events. They watch each other and learn how to present and demonstrate the robot and make sure to "take the message further!"

Describe the team's initiative to help start or form other FRC teams (including Jr.FLL, FLL, & FTC )

We have had several teams grow out of our team. Our sister team, Team 3489, was a direct result of our team getting bigger and better. Our team is solely Fort Dorchester High School. Team 3489 is from Ashley Ridge and Summerville High Schools, the other two high schools in Dorchester School District 2. They are doing so well now that they will probably split into separate teams soon. We also helped to form or grow teams in surrounding school districts including Wando High School and Cane Bay High School.

Describe the team's initiatives on assisting other FIRST teams (including Jr.FLL, FLL, FTC & FRC ) with progressing through the FIRST program.

We still work closely with the teams that we help to form or grow. We invite them to training at Bosch, communicate throughout the season, and support each other at events, on and off the field. We have also been assisting with local FLL teams in their regional and state competitions. They are very receptive to support from our team. We are actively recruiting at all levels at the schools that feed into Fort Dorchester High School. We want them to still be excited about robotics when they reach the high school level.

Describe how your team works with other FIRST teams to serve as mentors to younger or less experienced FIRST teams (including Jr.FLL, FLL, FTC & FRC )

Team 342 takes on roles of referee, judge, mentor, and cheerleader with FLL teams in our school district. We attend their practices, competitions, and STEM-related festivals to show that it only gets cooler and more competitive as they transition up in FIRST. We are often inspired by their exuberance and passion.

Describe your Corporate/ University Sponsors.

Many different corporate sponsors support Team 342 with financial aid, mentor personnel, and general support. Among these is Bosch, SPAWAR, County Council, Fort Dorchester High School, Dorchester School District 2, and Charleston Hospitality. Bosch is our main sponsor. They provide mentors, work space, special tools and skills, and financial assistance. The mentors are fully dedicated to the team and their success. They are also very transparent about design and strategy with all of our local teams so that our region can be as competitive as possible. To pay homage to German-based Bosch, our main fundraiser this past year was the First Annual Bot-toberfest. It was a German feast, compete with authentic cuisine and music, and a golf tournament. It was a resounding success and many lessons were learned. We look forward to a bigger and better Bot-toberfest 2015.

Describe the strength of your partnership with your sponsors with special emphasis on the 2014/2015 year and the preceding two to five years.

Fort Dorchester High School teacher involvement has exploded this year. In past years one teacher has supervised the team. We also had support for the animation portion from a computer teacher. This year, however, the science department has rallied behind robotics with an additional three teachers supervising and supporting the team. This is an increase of 300%. We are also reaching out to all teachers to include robotics themes in their classes. Utilizing project-based learning, teachers can assign meaningful work to develop real-world products for our team. These products include graphic design, video editing, promotional writing and more.

Describe how your team would explain what FIRST is to someone who has never heard of it.

FIRST is a vast network of students, professionals, teachers, and parents all working toward the common goal of celebrating STEM through mechanical, electrical, programming, media, business, and design sub teams. FIRST is a reason for a diverse group of students to work toward a common goal while developing team spirit, technical, business, and leadership skills. FIRST culminates is awesome events where teams compete with gracious professionalism and fervent passion with robots of their own creation. Not only have students built a robot, they have documented the victories and defeats of building their robot and their team.

Briefly describe other matters of interest to the FIRST judges, if any.

A really interesting aspect of robotics has been the evolution of new team members to veteran team members. New team members can require lots of supervision and motivation. The veteran team members have been great at keeping new members on task, teaching new skills, and holding each other accountable. By the end of build season they are all working toward that common goal of building the best robot they can within the requirements and restrictions that accompany Recycle Rush.