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## **For Immediate Release:**

### **Gravity Meets Grit: RTX's Pratt & Whitney Partnership Accelerates STEAM Dreams at the 6th Annual River City Gravity Race**

**Columbus, GA — May 28, 2026** — Get ready, Columbus! Let's Grow STEAMx proudly announces the return of the 6th Annual River City Gravity Race, happening Saturday, May 30, 2026, at Lakebottom Park. The action kicks off at 9:00 AM as nine rising stars — representing local schools, organizations and community groups — race head-to-head for the coveted title of **2026 River City Gravity Champion**.

This year's lineup features a powerhouse group of future leaders from Columbus, GA., each proudly representing their schools, organizations and communities. After weeks of preparation and mentorship by engineers from RTX's Pratt & Whitney, these young racers are ready to compete for bragging rights, championship glory and the honor of representing the River City at the **88th Annual International Soap Box Derby** in Akron, Ohio, from July 12–18, 2026.

Hosted by **Let's Grow STEAMx**, a nonprofit powering youth engagement and workforce readiness through hands-on STEAM programs, the River City Gravity Race is a full-throttle, community-powered event. Over the past few weeks, future leader participants have been constructing, problem-solving and refining their gravity cars — putting critical thinking, teamwork and innovation into high gear.

Robbie Branscomb, CEO of Let's Grow STEAMx and Race Director, captured the spirit of the day: "This is so much bigger than a race. It's about showing our future leaders what's possible when they lean in, stay curious, and take charge of building their own futures. Our champions didn't just construct gravity cars — they built confidence, sharpened critical thinking, and discovered a sense of pride that will fuel them for life. This is what it looks like when real-world STEAM education collides with unstoppable dreams. The River City Gravity Race isn't just a competition — it's a launchpad for bold, explorative learning."

David Britt, II, Chairman of the Let's Grow STEAMx Board, emphasized the life-changing impact: "The River City Gravity Race is more than a competition — it's a workforce readiness pipeline. Through our partnership with Pratt & Whitney, this year's champions received direct mentorship from engineers, gaining firsthand experience in critical thinking, teamwork, and real-world engineering processes. These are the skills that prepare young people for future careers in STEAM industries and beyond. At Let's Grow STEAMx, we are proud to help connect passion with pathways to success."

As a premier sponsor and mentoring partner, Pratt & Whitney, an RTX business, has fueled the race's success through hands-on support and mentorship.

"Working with these kids over the past 14 weeks, it has been truly inspiring to see the creativity and ingenuity these young students have brought to the gravity car race. Building soap box cars not only teaches them the fundamentals of engineering and design, but also fosters teamwork, problem-solving and critical-thinking skills," said Stephen Kapp, senior engineer, Pratt & Whitney and co-director, River City Racing Program. "This event is a testament to the bright future of our industry, as these talented young minds are the engineers and leaders of tomorrow."

This year's competition also marks the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of **Try Gravity Racing**, a campaign inviting the community — especially future leaders — to experience the excitement of soapbox-style racing and discover the fun, hands-on side of STEAM learning.

"A nominal registration fee unlocks an unforgettable experience — a gravity car ride, official race bib, helmet, and professional event photo," said Tashee' Singleton, Let's Grow STEAMx, CFOO. "Registration is required, and space is limited. Early registration is encouraged to ensure participation."

Best of all, the River City Gravity Race is FREE for spectators! Bring your family, grab a lawn chair, and come enjoy an action-packed day cheering on these incredible young racers. Plus, Chester's Bar-B-Que, our official Race Day Vendor, will be serving up delicious food and drinks — so come hungry and ready to celebrate!

The River City Gravity Race is fueled by the generous support of an outstanding group of sponsors whose commitment to education, innovation, and community makes this event possible. We proudly recognize **Pratt & Whitney, Chattahoochee Valley Community College, Amazon, Fountain City Classic, Inc., Columbus Crime Prevention, Columbus State University, Aflac, LightSpeed Datalinks, Muscogee County Sheriff Office, Hughston Clinic, Peaceful River Residential Services and Chester's Barbeque** for championing our future leaders and helping us bring readiness opportunities and STEAM learning to life in unforgettable ways.

Together, we are transforming dreams into reality and creating powerful learning experiences that will last a lifetime.

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## Event Details

**Date:** Saturday, May 30, 2026

**Time:** 9:00 AM

**Location:** Lakebottom Park, Columbus, GA

**Admission:** FREE — Bring your family, lawn chairs, and champion spirit! Food and drinks available from Chester's Bar-B-Que.

**Try Gravity Racing Registration:** Register at [letsgrowsteam.org](https://letsgrowsteam.org)