

Award funds robotics

By Stephanie Creech
Daily Times Senior Writer

Science teacher David Fansler has won \$2,000 to help start a robotics course at Beddingfield High School.

Fansler found out in July he was being recognized as one of the nation's most innovative educators in the 2007 ING Unsung Heroes awards program.

He was one of 100 winners and will go on to compete for an additional \$5,000, \$10,000 or \$25,000. Fansler was one of more than 1,400 people competing in the initial phase.

Representatives from ING, a global financial company, are tentatively scheduled to present Fansler his check next week at the school. The three grand prize winners should be announced in October.

The robotics program, which Fansler titled, "Robotics — Learning Electronics, Programming & Merging Them Together," should be available for the 2008-09 school year.

Fansler said students enrolled in Beddingfield's Engineering & Technology Academy will be able to take the course.

"At this point, I am touching base with Central Office on how to develop a state-approved curriculum for a course that has never been taught here before," Fansler said.

As far as Fansler knows, a robotics course has not been offered at Beddingfield or any other high school in the district.

During the 18-week course, students will learn the basics of electronics and how to program microprocessors. By the end of the course, students will have the knowledge to construct robots using the Lego MindStorm NXT Ro-



David Fansler

botics Kit.

Fansler said the course will involve some computer programming, electronics and a lot of hands-on building of robotic devices. He used to do engineering and design work for medical equipment.

Like other academy teachers, Fansler said he was looking for programs that not only enriches the students but interests them, as well. He said robotics is one of the things that tend to capture students' imagination. But Fansler said as with so many classes that are hands-on, it is one thing to say it's a great idea but questions inevitably arise as to where the money come from.

Fansler, who lives in Wilson, is starting his fourth year at Beddingfield.

"ING is proud to honor educators like David Fansler as they strive to make a difference in the lives of America's school children," said Bill Jasien, senior vice president for education and retail market sales with ING U.S. Financial Services.

"Our company is committed to education, and at the heart of it are teachers whose tireless efforts and dedication inspire, motivate, encourage and prepare our youth for success in the future. ING is honored to recognize these outstanding educators and to play a part in laying the foundation for the future of so many young people."