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LIFT, STEM Action Center bring MakerMinded manufacturing learning platform to Idaho

Program connects students to STEM experiences and skills to build Idaho's advanced manufacturing workforce

BOISE, Idaho (Jan. 2, 2019) — LIFT – Lightweight Innovations for Tomorrow, a Detroit-based national manufacturing innovation institute, and the Idaho STEM Action Center have officially launched the MakerMinded program in the Gem State. MakerMinded will expand students' and schools' access to world-class advanced manufacturing and science, technology, engineering, and math learning experiences through a digital platform that highlights student competition. Through these transformational experiences, middle and high school students will gain 21st-century skills and secure their path to in-demand STEM careers.

Originally designed by LIFT and Tennessee Tech University's iCUBE and launched in 2016, MakerMinded impassions students about advanced manufacturing and equips them with the skills and mindsets needed in the innovation economy. It directly links students to a diverse range of national and local STEM and advanced manufacturing programs, including manufacturing facility tours, gaming activities, and project-based learning. MakerMinded also drives a sense of competition, as students and schools receive points for each completed activity that are tallied on a real-time online leader board. The top schools are celebrated at year-end recognition events.

"Idaho is pleased to provide teachers and students throughout our state with access to an innovative program like MakerMinded," Idaho Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter said. "Our state's partnership with LIFT aligns perfectly with our mission to seek education and work-based learning opportunities that allow Idaho to build the workforce to fill STEM-related jobs and attract new business."

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STEM Action Center executive director Dr. Angela Hemingway concurs. “Manufacturing is an important part of Idaho’s economy, with over 1,600 manufacturing firms employing 10.2 percent of the workforce,” she said. “The nearly 70,000 manufacturing employees in Idaho have an average annual compensation of \$64,280.”

Idaho will become part of a national MakerMinded initiative that includes campaigns in Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee, and West Virginia, where LIFT works with local partners to onboard schools and activate students’ participation. To date, over 5,000 students and teachers from over 400 middle and high schools are active on the platform.

LIFT is a public-private partnership dedicated to developing and deploying advanced lightweight metal manufacturing technologies and implementing education and training programs to better prepare the workforce today and in the future.

“The innovative MakerMinded platform has proven successful in attracting students to the world of advanced manufacturers. LIFT is proud to be part of the movement to prepare the next generation of innovators and makers,” LIFT education and workforce development VP Emily DeRocco said. “The experiences MakerMinded provides help build the foundational technical and employability skills young students need as they prepare to enter a competitive career and adulthood.”

The program’s expansion into Idaho is made possible through a grant from the U.S. Department of Defense’s National Defense Education Program to help fulfill the mission to attract, inspire, and develop exceptional STEM talent across the education continuum. Through exposure to cutting-edge education programs and activities, MakerMinded students can become the future workforce the nation needs to meet its most complex defense technological and manufacturing challenges.

“I’m excited to see MakerMinded come to Idaho,” John McFarlane, Idaho’s MakerMinded coordinator at the STEM Action Center, said. “Advanced manufacturing is a rapidly expanding sector in Idaho’s economy and this program will help students see employment possibilities they might not have considered otherwise.”

The Idaho MakerMinded goal is to sign up at least 50 schools and 1,000 users across the state by the end of the 2018-2019 academic year. Awards will be presented to the top performing schools for their engagement in May 2019.

Students, schools, employers and others interested in joining the Idaho MakerMinded campaign should visit www.ID.makerminded.com.

About LIFT – Lightweight Innovations for Tomorrow

LIFT is a Detroit-based, public-private partnership committed to the development and deployment of advanced lightweight metal manufacturing technologies and implementing education and training initiatives to better prepare the workforce today and in the future. LIFT is one of the founding institutes of [Manufacturing USA](#) and is funded in part by the Department of Defense with management through the Office of Naval Research.

About the Idaho STEM Action Center

The Idaho STEM Action Center was created in 2015 because Idaho citizens are not entering the STEM pipeline fast enough to meet current and future Idaho workforce needs. Its goals are to coordinate and facilitate implementation of STEM programs, align education and workforce needs, and increase awareness of STEM throughout Idaho. The organization is working with industry, government, educators, and students to develop new resources and support high-quality teacher professional-development opportunities to foster a STEM-educated workforce that ensures Idaho's continued economic prosperity. Visit STEM.Idaho.gov for more information.

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