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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Idaho STEM educator award deadline looms

BOISE, Idaho (May 10, 2019) — The deadline to nominate teachers for the 2019 STEM educator of the year awards, officially known as the INDEEDS Awards, is looming, according to the Idaho STEM Action Center: May 19 at 11:30 p.m. MDT.

Short for Industry’s Excellent Educators Dedicated to STEM, the annual awards program honors teachers statewide who champion science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and connect students with industry leaders to mentor projects, gain real-world experience, and provide invaluable career guidance.

The STEM Action Center and industry sponsors will select a winner who teaches in grades K-6 and another who works in grades 7-12. Each will receive a check for \$2,000 and up to \$2,000 in funding to attend any STEM-related national conference, plus their schools will each receive \$2,000 to fund science, technology, engineering, and math initiatives.

The Idaho Technology Council will bestow the INDEEDS awards at its 2019 Hall of Fame gala Oct. 23 at Boise Centre.

Visit the STEM Action Center website at STEM.idaho.gov/indeeds to nominate a teacher.

According to Dr. Angela Hemingway, the STEM Action Center’s executive director, the nomination process is simple, self-nominations are encouraged, and the program is a great way to recognize teachers for their efforts to help build a STEM-educated workforce.

“The INDEEDS Awards are a fantastic opportunity to highlight and celebrate STEM educators and the amazing and important work they’re doing in our communities,” Dr. Hemingway said. “The awardees provide numerous opportunities for their students to engage in hands-on, project-based, student-centered STEM learning. These experiences foster 21st-century skills like critical and creative thinking, problem solving, innovation, and collaboration — skills even students who don’t pursue STEM careers will find invaluable.”

She said fostering a STEM-educated workforce and connecting industry and education is important to ensuring Idaho’s continued economic prosperity.

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“Idaho’s unfilled STEM jobs leaped from 3,800 in 2016 to 6,300 in 2018, which represents nearly \$413 million in lost personal wages and more than \$22 million in lost state tax receipts,” Dr. Hemingway said. “Providing teachers with the STEM skills and tools they need is essential to closing this workforce gap. Upwards of 100,000 STEM jobs will exist in Idaho by 2024, representing \$6.5 billion in personal income and almost \$350 million in tax revenue if our state is poised to fill them.”

The Micron Foundation, Idaho National Laboratory, Idaho Power, the Discovery Center of Idaho, Vynyl, Blocksmith, Trailhead, and the Idaho Technology Council have sponsored the program for many years. Vynyl is increasing its investment in the INDEEDS Awards, becoming a platinum sponsor this year along with INL because the software development firm’s management understands the value of aligning with state agencies working to build a robust STEM workforce.

“Vynyl believes in the mission of the Idaho STEM Action Center and is a proud supporter of its programs,” Nick Crabbs, a partner in Vynyl and vice president of community relations, said. “It’s important to raise our hand and be an ally to all the teachers who inspire the future engineers of Idaho. The INDEEDS Awards are a perfect showcase of how the STEM Action Center is doing great work in Idaho to support exceptional teachers in our state. We’d like to see corporate partnership with these kinds of programs grow, and in that light Vynyl jumped at the opportunity to highlight and raise awareness for this work.”

INL K-12 STEM program manager Jennifer Jackson concurred.

“On behalf of Battelle Energy Alliance, Idaho National Laboratory is proud to support and recognize teaching excellence in Idaho through the INDEEDS teacher awards program,” Jackson said. “Innovative STEM teachers remain at the heart of the effort to prepare and inspire tomorrow’s scientists, technicians and engineers.”

The Micron Foundation is a gold sponsor this year and Trailhead is a bronze sponsor. The STEM Action Center is seeking additional sponsors, and the commitment deadline is also May 19 at 11:30 p.m. MDT. All sponsorships qualify for an Idaho Educational Tax Credit or tax deduction.

Former Idaho Gov. Dirk Kempthorne created the INDEEDS awards — initially called the Governor’s Industry Award for Notable Teaching in Science, short for GIANTS — in 2001. In 2013, former Idaho Gov. C.L. “Butch” Otter incorporated the award presentation into ITC’s Idaho Innovation Awards, and in 2015 he assigned the program to the STEM Action Center.

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 science, technology, engineering, and math programs, align education and workforce needs, and increase awareness of STEM learning and careers 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.