



PILOT PROJECT 2017



BRIGHT SPOT LIBRARY as STEM Hub

Salmon Public Library Building a STEM Identity and Making Thought Leaders

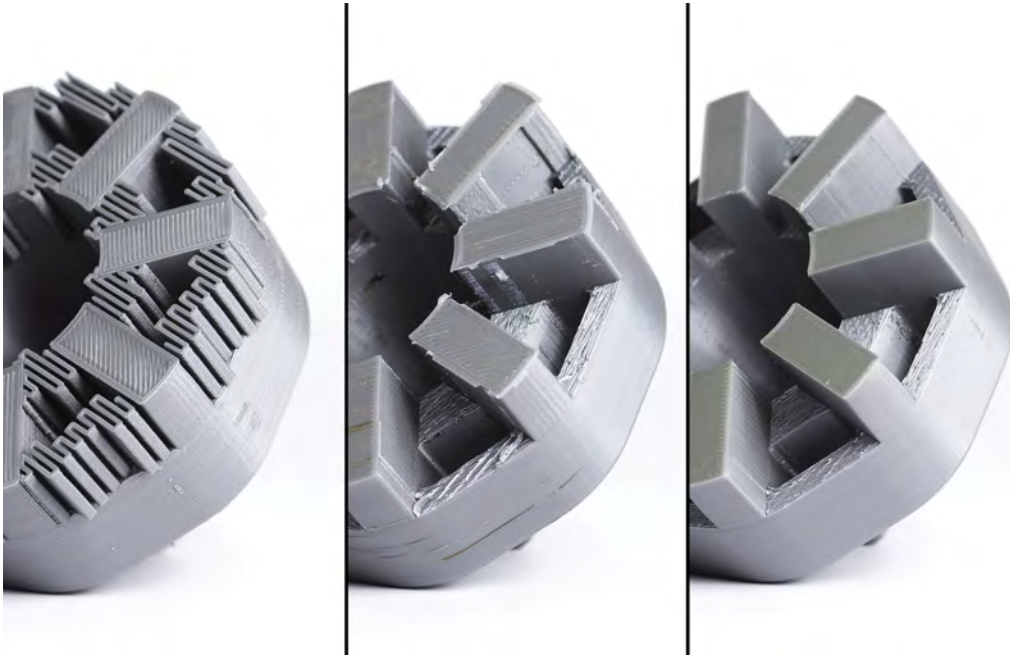
“What would happen if we could energize an entire community?” asks Francesca Bessey, one of Salmon Public Library’s VISTA volunteers. The answer? Barriers break. Rural communities are considered an underrepresented population in STEM because of limited accessibility, but this library’s success can’t be contained! Utilizing multiple grant opportunities from Idaho’s STEM AC, they’ve built a fierce momentum through numerous ways to integrate STEM into their town. They created a STEAM professional development workshop for educators so successful there are plans in the pipelines for more ahead. They’ve opened up 3D printing to the public, providing hands-on access in their space and offering classes to everyone interested. They stay closely connected with educators, circulating a monthly newsletter on STEM happenings and working shoulder-to-shoulder in helping teachers make STEM happen in the classroom! From bringing in the “egg-drop” lesson and exploring magnetic materials, to getting the kids buzzing about mousetrap-powered car races, these passionate library staff are doing it all!

Salmon is a strong community and greatly prides itself in its history and knowledge, and their library is a hub for the people and the wealth of traditional knowledge they carry. What’s especially unique about this library is their passion and drive to go above and beyond providing STEM materials and education; they’re bridging the heart of the town—the people’s working knowledge and what they each have to offer—to create a STEM identity for their community at large. It’s amazing, and it ties into the greater narrative of a STEM-strong Idaho. For the library’s leadership, it’s all about building on the concept of a library as being that “third place” for its people. It isn’t home, it isn’t school... it’s that place where anyone and everyone can gather together as a community of learners.

Salmon Public Library is a great hub for their town. They are working hard, and they are working towards becoming the quintessential third place that brings people through their doors—a magnet for the curious learner. It doesn’t stop there, either! Part of their vision is to make Salmon a town full of STEM hubs—making schools, various workplaces, and even homes spaces where people can thrive with STEM. They’re also building a platform for solid educator support: providing grant-funded materials, the know-how for applying STEM practices, and morale that motivates and compels progress. Ultimately, the library is calling on its citizenry to step up and become, in librarian Jeff Stratter’s words, “thought leaders” in STEM.



STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. It’s in these subjects that students learn the skills of critical thinking, problem-solving and collaboration—skills that translate to success in many fields. The STEM Action Center is here to support this development and provide Idaho with the talent pipeline it needs for its economy to thrive. With our best efforts, Idaho can generate a strong STEM-competent and competitive workforce that will make us become a prime STEM business destination.



BETTER STEM MEANS A BETTER IDAHO: WHY STEM MATTERS TO OUR ECONOMY

Did you know?...

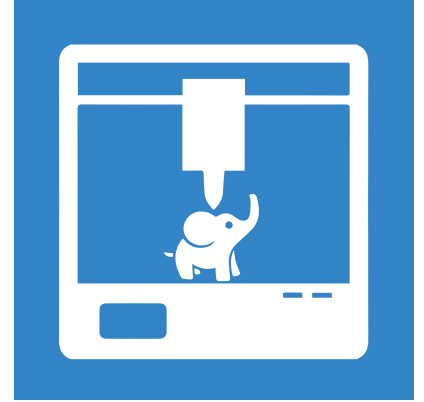
- In 2017, Idahoans failed to recognize \$420 million in personal income due to the over 7,000 STEM jobs which went unfilled.
- STEM jobs are growing in Idaho! Idaho Department of Labor predicts:
 - 23% growth by 2024;
 - ~36,000 STEM job openings in Idaho by 2024.
- Idaho STEM workers earn double non-STEM workers at a median wage of ~\$29/hour.
- 16 of the 20 fastest growing jobs in Idaho require STEM skills.

Today's students will be tomorrow's workforce, and the STEM AC has been created to develop the STEM-skilled talent that Idaho employers need. STEM education is the key to securing Idaho's economy—today and in the generations ahead.



“ I want kids to be able to say “Wow I can do this!”. Ultimately, the vision is about working towards this community-led mentality—scaffolding and building relationships that are anchored in exposure, inspiration, and creating a STEM identity together. ”

-Jeff Stratter,
Salmon Public Library



TODAY'S EFFORTS. TOMORROW'S SUCCESSES.

Industry participation is essential for success, and we're here to help make that participation easier. We've created many ways for Idaho businesses to engage with STEM education. From mentoring and volunteering to donating and partnering, you can help move the economy forward by closing the gaps in Idaho's workforce. Let us help you help Idaho!

LEARN MORE

To learn more about the STEM Action Center's strategies, success stories, and positive impacts in your community, email: admin@stem.idaho.gov.



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