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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

14 Idaho schools vied in statewide 3D printing competition

BOISE, Idaho (May 20, 2016) — Kids from across the state converged in Boise on Saturday for the 2016 Idaho FabSLAM Showcase, a 3D design and fabrication competition conducted by the Idaho STEM Action Center and Digital Harbor Foundation at the Discovery Center of Idaho.

Teams from 14 Idaho schools comprised of 76 students took part in the inaugural Idaho event. The FabSLAM Showcase was the culmination of a project that began in March when the STEM Action Center and the Digital Harbor Foundation trained 20 teachers from 15 schools throughout the state as coaches and equipped them with 3D printers.

For this year's theme, each team identified a problem in their community that could be addressed using 3D printing and digital fabrication and then developed and documented a product to help resolve it. At the FabSLAM Showcase, the teams presented their solutions to a panel of judges and a public audience for review and feedback.

From Nampa, Lone Star Middle School's G T.E.A.M. took first place with its Homeless Emergency Life Pack, or HELP. The wheeled suitcase can be turned into a one-person shelter. The team also earned the Students' Choice Award based on votes from their peers.

In second was the ElemEngineers from Boise's Hawthorne Elementary School — one of only two elementary schools in the nation participating in FabSLAM this year. The team created a trap that hangs on fruit trees to lure and kill fruit flies that destroy soft-skinned fruit crops.

Coder Bunnies, the third-place team from Kuna Middle School, created a filtration system to remove trash and sediment from canal water before it's used for irrigation.

Other participating schools included Emmett Middle School in Emmett, Jefferson Middle School in Caldwell, Jerome Middle School in Jerome, Kimberly Middle School in Kimberly, Lakeside Junior/Senior High School in Plummer, Marsing Middle School in Marsing, Middleton Middle School in Middleton, Vera C. O'Leary Middle School in Twin Falls, Vision Charter School in Caldwell, West Middle School in Nampa, and Vallivue Middle School in Caldwell.

Visit stem.idaho.gov/fabslam for links to all the student teams' FabSLAM project websites.

The winning teams also received cash prizes to help continue funding STEM learning in their schools. Short for science, technology, engineering, and math, STEM education is important to the future of Idaho, according to STEM Action Center executive director Angela Hemingway.

“STEM skills and knowledge are needed for critical and creative thinking, problem solving, innovation, and collaboration,” Hemingway said. “Plus, STEM jobs pay better. For instance, Idaho's median hourly wage for non-STEM jobs is \$15.60 while STEM jobs pay more than \$32 per hour. And each new STEM job creates five additional white-collar and blue-collar jobs.”

Economic Modeling Specialists International anticipates robust job growth in STEM careers in Idaho by 2024: 14 percent in computing, 9 percent in engineering, and 23 percent in advanced manufacturing, including 3D printing and design. Meanwhile, the Idaho Department of Labor reports 3,800 STEM jobs go unfilled in the Gem State annually.

Launched by the Digital Harbor Foundation at the 2014 White House Maker Faire, FabSLAM is designed to engage youth in identifying, designing, prototyping, testing, and iterating solutions to real-world problems. The Digital Harbor Foundation partnered with the Association of Science-Technology Centers and the Technology Councils of North America to expand the Baltimore program nationwide, with youth from Idaho and Pittsburgh participating this year. Visit digitalharbor.org/fabslam/idaho for more details.

Hemingway said the STEM Action Center joined the innovative FabSLAM program because 3D printing is quickly becoming commonplace in the areas of healthcare, robotics, and the automotive and aerospace industries.

About the Idaho STEM Action Center

The Idaho STEM Action Center is part of the governor's office and was created by state lawmakers in 2015 to enhance Idaho's STEM environment by connecting resources, students, educators and businesses. 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 to ensure Idaho's continued economic prosperity. Visit stem.idaho.gov for more information.

About the Digital Harbor Foundation

The Digital Harbor Foundation is dedicated to fostering learning, creativity, productivity and community through education. In 2013 it transformed a closed-down rec center in Baltimore into a vibrant tech center for youth. In 2014 it launched the Center of Excellence to train others how to incorporate making into their own learning environments. This year with help from the Association of Science-Technology Centers and the Technology Councils of North America it expanded FabSLAM to Idaho and Pittsburgh. Visit digitalharbor.org for more information.

About the Discovery Center of Idaho

Founded in 1989, the Discovery Center of Idaho is an interactive science center that inspires lifelong interest and learning in STEM fields by providing exhibits and educational programs that offer authentic, sensory experiences making science, technology, engineering and math tangible. Visit dcidaho.org for more information.

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