



CONTACT:

Maureen O'Toole, (208) 332-1723, foundation@STEM.Idaho.gov

Tony Harrison, (208) 880-9814, tony@COMMposition.biz

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Idaho STEM Action Center establishes nonprofit foundation

BOISE, Idaho (Oct. 4, 2017) — The Idaho STEM Action Center today announced creation of the Idaho STEM Action Center Foundation to raise awareness and funding for science, technology, engineering and math education and related workforce development efforts.

At the Idaho Legislature's direction, the charitable foundation will help the STEM Action Center implement best practices in education, provide year-round experiences and opportunities for educators and students, and connect education to industry resources to enhance Idaho's long-term economic prosperity.

"Establishing a public-information and fundraising arm for the STEM Action Center is critical to gaining community and industry buy-in for more comprehensively building STEM into our K-through-Career education system," Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter said. "STEM education must no longer be seen as a nice addition to our existing academic and vocational-technical systems; it must be at the very core of our economic competitiveness and well-being."

The STEM Action Center Foundation's founder, Maureen O'Toole, concurs.

"The foundation will improve the STEM Action Center's ability to provide innovative, life-shaping education," O'Toole said. "It offers a way for organizations and individuals to donate to the STEM Action Center and enhance the wonderful investment Idaho's legislators and governor have made in the Idaho STEM community."

O'Toole is a military veteran who also served as CEO for Southern Idaho's Girl Scouts of Silver Sage Council and as a public school teacher in Idaho. She brings a wealth of experience in leadership, education, community collaboration and nonprofit organizations. As CEO of Girl Scouts of Silver Sage, O'Toole was instrumental in strengthening STEM opportunities for members and partnered with the STEM Action Center to provide relevant, exciting experiences.

O'Toole said she welcomes the opportunity to work closely with community leaders and local businesses throughout Idaho to achieve the STEM Action Center's goals and objectives.

"The foundation will develop STEM funding and resource opportunities for educators and students across Idaho," she said. "Its goal is to create sustainable funding for programs that connect industry to classroom learning and help students see the link between what they learn and the amazing professional opportunities available in Idaho."

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The STEM Action Center reached more than 204,000 students and nearly 5,000 teachers with STEM education and experiences in the last year.

Dutch Bros. Coffee is the foundation's first benefactor. As part of its Buck 4 Kids giveback day, the company's Boise and Meridian locations are donating \$1 from every drink sold last Friday, Sept. 29, to Reuseum Education Inc. The STEM Action Center will match the Dutch Bros. donation 50 cents on the dollar up to \$12,500.

Reuseum Education is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that provides learning opportunities to enhance children's knowledge of science, technology, engineering, and math, and the donations will be used to offer no- and low-cost STEM-based workshops for youth.

To learn more about the STEM Action Center Foundation, contact O'Toole at (208) 332-1723 or foundation@STEM.idaho.gov.

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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