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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jan. 12 deadline looms for eCYBERMISSION registration

BOISE, Idaho (Jan. 6, 2022) — The deadline for youth to register for Idaho’s third annual eCYBERMISSION competition, a national Web-based STEM challenge for students in grades 6-9, is looming: Wednesday Jan. 12.

The Idaho STEM Action Center partners with the U.S. Army Educational Outreach Program and the National Science Teachers Association to bring the popular competition to the Gem State. Participants are challenged to explore how science, technology, engineering, and math apply to their world while working as a team to solve problems in their communities.

The STEM Action Center will award public formal and informal educators advising the winning state teams that place first, second, and third with monetary awards of \$1,000, \$500, and \$250, respectively. The cash prizes will be administered through their school or organization for STEM supplies in their teaching environment to sustain the eCYBERMISSION program.

In addition, the Army will give each student on a first-place state-winning team a Series EE U.S. Savings Bond worth up to \$1,000 in matured value. It also will give each student on a second-place state-winning team a Series EE U.S. Savings Bond worth up to \$500 in matured value. Additional cash prizes will be awarded to regional finalists and winners and national winners.

Educators can advise teams of 2-4 students in grades 6-9. Mixed grade teams are allowed, but they will compete at the highest grade level represented in the team. Team advisors must be at least 21 years old and may register more than one team.

Teams must obtain a minimum average score of 300 during the virtual judging phase to be eligible for awards.

Teams must be registered — and students assigned to them — by Jan. 12 at 11:59 p.m. EST. Mission folders must be submitted by March 2 at 11:59 p.m. EST. Virtual judging takes place March 16-30. Regional judging period takes place April 25-29. State and regional winners will be notified by mid-May. The Army and NSTA will stage a national judging and education event in the Washington, D.C., metro area June 20-24.

According to STEM Action Center executive director Dr. Kaitlin Maguire, competitions like eCYBERMISSION are important to the state's economic well-being.

"Our eCYBERMISSION students are engaging in a real-world research-based competition just like with our Idaho Science & Engineering Fairs and our Idaho Exhibition of Ideas competitions," Dr. Maguire said. "They will find this experience invaluable as they transition into the workforce. And with eCYBERMISSION being a virtual competition it is accessible to all Idaho students. Participating students will learn important lessons about how to work in small groups to conduct unique, relevant research and have the opportunity to present their findings in a virtual venue."

In addition to facilitating creative thinking, problem solving, innovation, and collaboration, Dr. Maguire said STEM jobs pay about twice as much as non-STEM jobs.

"STEM skills are required for Idaho's fastest-growing, in-demand, and highest-paying jobs," she said. "And among Idaho parents who were surveyed, 99 percent believe STEM skills will play an important role in the future, and within a decade 90 percent of jobs will require digital literacy."

Visit stem.idaho.gov/ecybermission for more details.

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 increase equitable access to STEM opportunities, align education and workforce needs, and amplify awareness of STEM throughout Idaho. The organization is working with industry, government, educators, and students to develop new resources and support high-quality professional-development opportunities to foster a STEM-educated workforce that ensures Idaho's continued economic prosperity.

Visit STEM.idaho.gov for more information, and visit <https://STEM.idaho.gov/support-us/foundation> to make a tax-deductible donation to the Idaho STEM Action Center Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, to enhance the investment the state has made in Idaho's STEM community. Contributions provide greater access to STEM camps for children, student competitions, and many other life-shaping programs.

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