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<u>FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE</u>

Gov. Little declares Dec. 5-11 CS Ed Week

TWIN FALLS, Idaho (Dec. 5, 2021) — Idaho Lt. Gov.-elect Scott Bedke coded with students at Vera C. O'Leary Middle School in Twin Falls today as people worldwide began celebrating Computer Science Education Week and the 10th anniversary of Hour of Code. Bedke also read aloud a proclamation from Idaho Gov. Brad Little, declaring Dec. 5-11 Computer Science Education Week in Idaho and urging the state's citizens to participate in Hour of Code.

"We live in the fastest-growing state in the nation, which often requires innovative solutions to meet a growing demand," Bedke said. "Placing an emphasis on STEM curricula will help our students become the problem solvers we need in the long run and, most importantly, allow them the opportunity to find a good paying Idaho job."

Volunteer staff from Idaho Power and new Idaho STEM Action Center executive director Caty Solace were on hand to help O'Leary computer science teacher Annette McFarlin lead one of her classes through an Hour of Code assignment.

Over 100 similar events are happening statewide. Boise Mayor Lauren McLean is coding with Riverside Elementary students Tuesday. Celebrated educator and incoming Idaho Rep. Soñia Galaviz, Ed.D., is leading Hour of Code events all week at Whittier Elementary in Boise.

Throughout the week volunteers from Applied Apps, Battelle Energy Alliance, Clearwater Analytics, Cradlepoint, Idaho Central Credit Union, Idaho Power, J.R. Simplot Co., Micron, Microsoft, Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories, and Syringa Networks are staging Hour of Code events in partnership with schools in Bellevue, Boise, Eagle, Idaho Falls, Jerome, Meridian, Pocatello, Potlatch, and Twin Falls.

"STEM education provides a framework to think critically about the world and how we can find solutions and create opportunities," Idaho Power president and CEO Lisa Grow said. "Idaho Power is proud to support Hour of Code and the STEM educators who are inspiring the next generation of problem solvers."

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Considered the largest learning event in history, Hour of Code is a global movement Code.org founded in 2013 that has reached more than 1.5 billion learners ages 4 to 104 in over 180 countries. Hour of Code events coincide with international Computer Science Education Week and offer a one-hour introduction to computer science and the basics of coding via fun tutorials in more than 45 languages.

CS Ed Week is an annual call to action to inspire K-12 students to learn computer science and celebrate contributions of students, teachers, and partners in the field. It is playing host to more than 61,000 events worldwide this year, including nearly 15,000 in the U.S. and at least 137 in Idaho.

Idaho technology leaders agree STEM initiatives like CS Ed Week and Hour of Code play an important role in preparing Idaho's future workforce.

"The STEM Action Center's work is important for Idaho's economic success," Syringa Networks marketing and sales vice president Larry Price said. "Building and retaining Idaho talent is paramount to the continued economic success of our state and also helps attract businesses to Idaho. We appreciate and applaud all of the efforts of the STEM Action Center to promote these important disciplines."

"Supporting STEM-based programs shouldn't be optional for any forward-thinking company," Clearwater Analytics chief technology officer Souvik Das said. "It's a critical investment in our future workforce. Today's STEM students will play a key role in driving new innovations to solve big challenges. Our team is committed to mentoring Idaho's local students, and through the Idaho Stem Action Center Foundation's Hour of Code, helping them to gain new perspectives using technology."

Solace, who officially began her job today as the STEM Action Center's new executive director, concurs.

"Developing strong computer science skills is a great pathway to good paying in-demand careers in Idaho," she said. "In fact, computer science jobs account for more than half of all projected job growth in STEM fields. And growth is expected for computer occupations like IT security and software development — especially here in Idaho, where the tech sector is one of the fastest growing in the nation."

The Education Commission of the States predicts computing jobs in Idaho will grow 19 percent by 2027. Meanwhile, the Idaho Dept. of Labor reports 19 of Idaho's top-20 hot jobs through 2026 require STEM skills — with applications software developers and information security analysts among the top-five in-demand fields. It expects demand for applications software developers and information security analysts will grow by 30 percent annually between 2016-2026.

As part of its CS Ed Week celebrations, Idaho STEM Action Center in collaboration with Learning Blade will stage a free webinar for educators on Wednesday. Learning Blade is a system of interactive online lessons, teacher lesson plans, and printable at-home activities for 5th to 9th graders, where students learn about STEM and computer science careers while reviewing academics. This resource is free to all Idaho educators and students through an agreement with the STEM Action Center.

The agency also offers a certificate of achievement for educators to recognize students who demonstrate exemplary dedication to computer science learning by completing 10 hours of coding activities during CS Ed Week. Along with a certificate, students are eligible for a variety of prizes that are being offered by Idaho Digital Learning Alliance.

Visit http://stem.idaho.gov/computerscience/csedweek to register for the Learning Blade webinar, download the certificate of achievement template, and to sign up for prizes.

Other online resources include hourofcode.com, code.org, and csedweek.org. Plus, you can visit blocksmithxr.com/blog/blocksmiths-hour-of-code-2022 to play an Hour of Code game from Idaho's own Blocksmith and csunplugged.org for activities that don't involve screen time.

Participants are encouraged to use such hashtags as #CodingIdaho, #IdahoSTEMAC, #CSEdWeek, and #HourofCode when posting about Computer Science Education Week and Hour of Code to social media.

About Idaho STEM Action Center
Idaho STEM Action Center is an education and growth catalyst helping educators, businesses, families, and communities prepare the workforce of tomorrow. An incubator, connector, and advocate of STEM thinking and initiatives, the agency provides resources, support, and problem solving that spark innovation and offer paths to prosperity based on Idahoans' shared values of hard work, collaboration, self-determination, family, and community stability. Learn more at stem.idaho.gov and visit stem.idaho.gov/support-us/foundation to make a tax-deductible donation to its 501(c)(3) nonprofit foundation 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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Text of Idaho 2022 CS Ed Week Proclamation

WHEREAS, computer science literacy is foundational for the digital age and underpins the information technology sector of our economy, which is a significant contributor to Idaho's economic output; and

WHEREAS, computer science is one of the most in-demand college degrees, computing is used throughout many careers, and computer occupations are expected to see fast job growth as strong demand is expected for cybersecurity and software development; and

WHEREAS, computing technology is valued as an integral part of our culture and is changing how people interact with each other and the world around them, transforming industry, creating new fields of commerce, driving innovation in all fields of science, and increasing productivity in many economic sectors; and

WHEREAS, Idaho is recognized as a national leader in prioritizing computer science education, becoming the second state in the nation to adopt all nine Code.org Policy recommendations;

WHEREAS, all students deserve a thorough preparation in computer science education, including access to the qualified teachers, technology, and age-appropriate curricular resources needed to learn computer science at the elementary and secondary levels of education; and

WHEREAS, providing students the opportunity to participate in high-quality computer science activities exposes them to the real-world experiences and provides critical thinking skills that will serve them throughout their lives; and

WHEREAS, participating in an Hour of Code during Computer Science Education Week can help demystify the field of computer science and encourage more students to continue their computer science studies; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BRAD LITTLE, *Governor of the State of Idaho, do hereby proclaim December 5-11, 2022, to be*

COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION WEEK

BRAD LITTLE, GOVERNOR

LAWERENCE DENNEY, SECRETARY OF STATE

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