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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Gov. Little proclaims March STEM Matters Month

BOISE, Idaho (Feb. 29, 2024) — Idaho Gov. Brad Little is declaring March STEM Matters Month, calling attention to the need for a STEM-literate workforce and spotlighting several science, technology, engineering, and math events taking place across the state over the next 31 days.

“The importance of STEM education in today’s technology- and knowledge-based economy cannot be overstated,” Gov. Little said. “From logging to computer science, mining to healthcare, or teaching to business, the skills that STEM education fosters will propel Idaho students into high-paying, meaningful careers.”

Business leaders and working scientists concurred.

“Science, technology, engineering and math make the world go round, and we can’t afford to miss out on connecting Idaho students with future opportunities in these fields,” said Molly Dimick, MBA, an environmental engineer in Southeast Idaho and treasurer of the Idaho STEM Action Center Foundation board. “Investing in STEM education means inspiring young minds, creating networks, and developing tomorrow’s workforce. In addition to being influenced by the students’ enthusiasm, increasing their awareness of potential career fields is one of my favorite parts of volunteering in my community.”

Rod Gramer, president and CEO of Idaho Business for Education, echoed Dimick’s sentiment: “STEM education is so important to the future of Idaho and its economy. Many of the positions that employers need to fill require skills in science, technology, engineering, and math. We need to inspire Idaho’s students to see how these careers benefit their fellow citizens and enhance the quality of life for all Idahoans. That’s what compelling STEM education can do.”

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John Cassleman, K-12 education outreach program manager at Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories, stressed the importance of early childhood STEM education.

“The earlier we can get young people excited about STEM the better,” Cassleman said. “The STEM mindset contributes to a clearer understanding of the world, a better ability to solve problems, the confidence to invent new solutions, and opportunities to create a better future.”

Among the noteworthy STEM events occurring throughout Idaho this March are:

- **She Can STEM March 1** — Upwards of 60 sixth-grade female and female-identifying students will convene at Sliger Auditorium (Magic Valley Arts Council Building) to [explore and learn about STEM careers from female STEM professionals](#) who live and work in their communities. The Idaho STEM Ecosystem event features presentations about STEM careers available in Idaho and hands-on, interactive, engaging activities that give students the chance to see themselves in STEM.
- **Invent Idaho state finals March 1-2** — See young inventors’ innovative designs and amazing solutions to real-world problems at the [state finals](#) at the University of Idaho in Moscow.
- **Reach for the Stars Gala Celebration March 8** — Join the Children’s Museum of Idaho in Meridian and sponsor CapEd at the [grand opening](#) of a new expansion that includes a Children’s Planetarium.
- **Aerospace Day March 13** — Students at [Riverside Elementary School](#) in Boise will soar to new heights as they explore the wonders of flight and space exploration. From building rockets to learning about the stars and planets, there will be something for every aspiring astronaut and engineer.
- **GREAT Day March 14** — [Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories](#) hosts Getting Ready for Engineering and Technology (GREAT) Day each spring for 8th graders who are interested in STEM. The conference provides students an opportunity to engage with engineering principles and engineers themselves. Students explore different breakout sessions to learn and apply concepts taught by SEL engineers and instructors, witness innovation in action, and collaborate to solve design challenges.
- **FIRST Idaho FRC Regional Robotics Competition March 21-23** — Forty teams from Idaho, Utah, Wyoming, Nevada, California, Montana, Mexico, and Canada will pit their robots against each other at the Ford Idaho Center in Nampa. [Friday and Saturday offer the best viewing](#), with opening ceremonies beginning at 8:30 a.m. and matches from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Parking and entry are free.
- **Hackfort March 21-23** — The Treefort Music Fest’s [celebration of all things tech](#), democratizing technology, and tech culture includes 40 noteworthy speakers, 15 workshops, 12 speaking sessions, and 10 panel discussions.

Gov. Little urged Idaho citizens to help further STEM education in March by volunteering at a school or nonprofit, conducting STEM events with your kids at home, or supporting organizations like Idaho STEM Action Center, the Idaho STEM Ecosystem, and the Idaho Out-of-School Network.

According to STEM Action Center executive director Caty Solace, STEM knowledge and skills are important to the future of Idaho.

“STEM learning helps students develop creative thinking, problem solving, innovation, and collaboration skills,” she said. “These durable skills are in high demand by Idaho employers that want to solve problems in our communities and beyond.”

Solace said STEM jobs in Idaho are projected to grow 15.4 percent by 2030, outpacing the national average of STEM job growth at 10 percent, and that 90 percent of jobs will require digital literacy within a decade.

“STEM jobs are incredibly interesting and include careers in healthcare, engineering, software development, finance, agriculture, and construction,” she said. “In addition to being personally rewarding, they’re financially rewarding, too, with STEM jobs paying nearly twice as much as non-STEM jobs.”

Participants are encouraged to use the hashtag #STEMMattersIdaho when posting about STEM Matters Month to social media, as well as #Idaho and #STEM.

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 2024 STEM Matters Month Proclamation

WHEREAS, Idaho students require a strong foundation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills to succeed in Idaho’s growing economy; and

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WHEREAS, talent development for a highly skilled workforce is critical to Idaho and the nation's competitiveness; and

WHEREAS, leaders in communities across Idaho recognize the importance of building a STEM identity in students and seek to empower Idaho educators to gain STEM content knowledge and pedagogical skills; and

WHEREAS, Idaho's leaders are building local communities of learning and practice to increase student excitement for and interest in STEM; and

WHEREAS, the Idaho STEM Action Center, State Department of Education, State Board of Education, Workforce Development Council, Idaho employers, and institutes of higher education and skilled trades training programs have partnered to expand pathways into STEM careers; and

WHEREAS, educators, employers, students, parents, and others will come together March 1-31, 2024, across the state to highlight Idaho's deep passion for STEM knowledge, career awareness, and integration into their learning environments as they prepare to compete in today's technology and knowledge-based economy;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BRAD LITTLE, *Governor of the State of Idaho*, do hereby proclaim the month of March to be *STEM Matters Month in Idaho*,

And encourage educators and leaders in the government, business, technology and science communities to continue this STEM partnership to help Idaho students better analyze, reason, access technology, and communicate solutions to the challenges of today and tomorrow, and to foster their consideration for STEM careers in Idaho.

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