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BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA ANNOUNCES EXTENSION OF INNOVATIVE STEM PILOT PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE YOUTH TO EXPLORE STEM AS A FUTURE CAREER

The STEM Scouts program is designed to appeal to youths' natural curiosity while giving them hands-on STEM experience in a fun environment

Irving, Texas (April 15, 2015) — The Boy Scouts of America today announced a new program to engage children naturally curious about fizzing, bubbling, building, designing, and much more. The new pilot program, called STEM Scouts, will roll out to 12 councils this fall and will give young people a new, fun way to discover science, technology, engineering, and math. The program launches at a time when careers in STEM-related fields are on the rise.

By increasing STEM learning opportunities and establishing partnerships with businesses and universities, STEM Scouts, through a hands-on learning environment, gives young people real experience in these fields and the opportunity to work closely with STEM educators and experts.

“As one of the leading youth-serving organizations, we have a responsibility to provide young people with new, relevant, and fresh programs and experiences that will have long-lasting impacts on their lives,” said Wayne Brock, the BSA’s Chief Scout Executive. “Today’s youth crave hands-on learning experiences and STEM Scouts fills that need while honoring Scouting’s proven and impactful values and ideals. The success of the pilot program has given our movement direction on how we can continue to innovate our programs and help youth rethink how Scouting can impact their lives.”

The BSA launched the STEM Scouts pilot program in 2014 in Knoxville, Tennessee, giving youth—both boys and girls—a new way to learn about STEM outside of the classroom with the goal of establishing a long-term interest in one of these rapidly growing fields. Within six months of the pilot launch, school officials, teachers, and parents were already noticing a big difference.

“STEM Scouts seems to be the light switch for many of the kids, giving them hope and direction with their academics,” said Susan Martin, site resource coordinator at South Knoxville Elementary School, one of the schools affiliated with the pilot program. “The big differentiator with this program is that it combines academics with character-building skills, all in a fun, active environment. This has been the key to help students understand that learning can be fun.”

The pilot program served nearly 400 students and had an attendance rate of more than 90 percent. Schools reported that STEM Scouts helped students who had previously struggled in these areas improve their



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understanding of the subjects and become more interested in science, math, and technology. The rousing success of and interest in the pilot program enabled the BSA to extend the program to 12 additional councils and reach more youth.

STEM Scouts will work closely with STEM professionals and conduct experiments that could lead to new inventions, technologies, machines, and medicines, and develop ideas that change lives. Through weekly meetings and four- to six-week modules that cover a variety of disciplines, STEM Scouts is designed to be fast paced, thought provoking, and fun. The coed program, available to elementary, middle, and high school students, provides a great opportunity for collaboration and gives all youth a chance to become STEM experts.

What's more, STEM Scouts at the high school level have the opportunity to have their work peer-reviewed by scientists and engineers and then published, helping to increase their chances for college scholarships and program admissions. Additionally, each council will be encouraged to partner with a local university to aid in the execution of the program and provide resources and counsel to make sure the program is giving youth the latest in STEM education.

This new program will be delivered through chartered organizations and may be augmented with mobile STEM laboratories and STEM summer camps.

The following 12 councils have been selected to participate in the STEM Scouts program, pending their board approval:

- Capitol Area Council; Austin, TX
- Pathway to Adventure; Chicago, IL
- Circle Ten Council; Dallas, TX
- Denver Area Council; Denver, CO
- Connecticut Rivers Council; East Hartford, CT
- Sam Houston Area Council; Houston, TX
- Crossroads of America Council; Indianapolis, IN
- Middle Tennessee Council; Nashville, TN
- Greater St. Louis Area Council; St. Louis, MO
- Catalina Council; Tucson, AZ
- Garden State Council; Westampton, NJ
- Samoset Council; Weston, WI

“Fostering a strong STEM education is our organization’s best opportunity to boost the spirit of innovation and another way we’re helping all Scouts be prepared for life,” added Brock.

About the Boy Scouts of America

The Boy Scouts of America provides the nation’s foremost youth program of character development and values-based leadership training, which helps young people be “Prepared. For Life.®” The Scouting organization is composed of nearly 2.4 million youth members between the ages of 7 and 21 and approximately 960,000



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volunteers in local councils throughout the United States and its territories. For more information on the Boy Scouts of America, please visit www.scouting.org.

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