

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Thurs., June 22, 2017

### **Landmark conference on connecting Iowa schools and businesses draws hundreds**

*Emergent, educational innovations on work-based learning showcased at "Fast-Track Iowa's Future" Conference*

**CEDAR FALLS, Iowa** – Community leaders convened in Des Moines yesterday with the goal of building localized, school-business partnerships that inspire and prepare students for STEM careers across Iowa.

Yesterday at the "Fast-Track Iowa's Future" Conference in the Iowa Events Center, more than 500 Iowans from business and industry, higher education, K-12, non-profit, state and local government as well as students gathered to share best practices, learn about available resources and develop relationships with others in their communities. Eleven panels and 18 showcase presentations highlighted readily-replicable best practices around work-based learning opportunities and methods.

"Future Ready Iowa is about meeting our state's need for talent in high-demand business sectors that drive Iowa's economy, like advanced manufacturing, healthcare, agricultural science, information technology, finance and other fields," said Gov. Kim Reynolds, co-chair of the Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council. "That is what this conference was about—to connect education systems with the recipients they serve – employers—so that graduates are job-ready for the exciting, meaningful strong wage occupations that await right here in local communities across the state."

Contributing to the Future Ready Iowa vision, the STEM Council led planning alongside instrumental partners, including the Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Workforce Development, Iowa Economic Development Authority, Alliant Energy, Rockwell Collins, the U.S. Department of Labor, Northeast Iowa Community College and more. Funded in part through a grant from the National Governors Association, the event was also supported by Alliant Energy, AT&T, Cognizant, Elevate Iowa, ITC Midwest, Iowa Biotech Association, Iowa Workforce Development and Rockwell Collins.

"Strong partnerships and collaboration across agencies and organizations, as seen in both the planning and showcasing of this 'Fast-Track Iowa's Future' Conference is crucial to achieving our state's goal of 70 percent of Iowa's workforce with some type of post-secondary education or training by 2025," said Lt. Gov. Adam Gregg. "Leveraging our plentiful existent assets in both education and workforce to grow and expand exemplary models is sensible and efficient, and definitively Iowan."

For more information about the event, visit [www.IowaSTEM.gov/Fast-Track-Iowas-Future](http://www.IowaSTEM.gov/Fast-Track-Iowas-Future).

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#### **About the Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council**

Established in July 2011 via Governor's Executive Order, the Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council is a public-private partnership of educators, companies and Iowa students and families addressing policies and programs designed to improve Iowa's educational system focused on STEM. The STEM Council works to engage and prepare students for a career-ready workforce path, regain our State's historic leadership position in education, and provide a vital competitive economic advantage now, and for the future, to ensure that every Iowa student has access to world-class STEM education opportunities. The 47-member STEM Council is chaired by Governor Kim Reynolds and Kemin Industries President and CEO Dr. Chris Nelson. For more information, visit [www.IowaSTEM.gov](http://www.IowaSTEM.gov).