**OFFICE OF GOVERNOR STEVE SISOLAK**

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## Gov. Sisolak encourages Nevada's young women in high school and college to join cybersecurity competition

Carson City, NV – Governor Steve Sisolak today announced that the State is partnering with the SANS Institute to launch Girls Go Cyberstart and Cyber FastTrack in Nevada.  The initiative provides young women in high school and college with an opportunity to learn cybersecurity skills, discover their cyber talents, and explore what a career in the field entails.  The three high schools in Nevada that have the most participants will win awards of $1,000, $750, and $500, respectively.  At least 10 high school girls will each get $500 scholarships to help them pay for college.  The top college students from around the nation will be eligible to win $2.5 million in scholarships.

"I am committed to ensuring that all young women across Nevada have access to the education and experiences that will prepare them for exciting careers in STEM fields," **said Governor Sisolak.** "Initiatives like Girls Go Cyberstart inspire our students to discover a passion for innovation and find their pathway to a rewarding career here in Nevada."

Girls Go CyberStart is a free cybersecurity skills program designed to educate and inspire high school girls to discover the opportunities and rewards offered by a career in cybersecurity. Participating students do not need prior cybersecurity knowledge or IT experience. All that is required is a computer and an internet connection. In 2018, 1,075 girls in Nevada from 38 different high schools, second most in the nation, participated in Girls Go CyberStart, and the goal for 2019 is to double those numbers.

"Technology is transforming every sector of Nevada's economy and the need for cybersecurity professionals has never been greater," **said Brian Mitchell, Director of the Governor's Office of Science, Innovation and Technology (OSIT).**  "One of OSIT's strategic priorities is to grow and develop Nevada's cyber workforce.  Girls Go CyberStart will help us cultivate interest and awareness of careers in cybersecurity among the next generation of Nevada's young women."

According to OSIT, jobs in Nevada requiring cybersecurity skills are projected to grow 39 percent through 2026.  These jobs have an average annual wage of about $83,000.

As part of the CyberStart Game, participants will take on the roles of agents in the Cyber Protection Agency where they will develop forensics and analysis skills and deploy them to sleuth through challenges and tackle various online cybercriminal gangs. As they work their way through the game, players will be challenged to solve puzzles and be introduced to a broad spectrum of cybersecurity disciplines, including forensics, open-source intelligence, cryptography, and web application security.

In 2018, Nevada was one of 16 states that participated in Girls Go CyberStart. Cheyenne High School in Las Vegas enrolled 269 girls in the competition last year, more students than any other school in the country.  News 3 Las Vegas profiled some of the participating students at Cheyenne last year.  This year, 25 states will participate in the competition.

In addition to the high school competition, female and male college students will also be able to play this year in a companion program called Cyber FastTrack, which allows students who excel in both the CyberStart Game and CyberStart Essentials (an online course that extends the learning of the CyberStart Game) to be eligible to win $2.5 million in scholarships for advanced cybersecurity training and to be introduced to employers for internships and jobs in the field.

Registration begins February 19, 2019.  High school girls may register for Girls Go CyberStart through March 20, when the games begin. College students may register for Cyber FastTrack beginning on April 5 and will be able to start playing immediately. There is no charge to participate.

To see the types of challenges the students will face in the games, please visit https://go.joincyberstart.com/. More information may be found at girlsgocyberstart.org for Girls Go CyberStart and at cyber-fasttrack.org for Cyber FastTrack.

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