



Brian Sandoval
Governor

STATE OF NEVADA

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF SCIENCE, INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY

100 North Stewart Street, Suite 220
Carson City, Nevada 89701
775-687-0987 Fax: 775-687-0990



Brian L. Mitchell
Director

OSIT INVESTS \$100,000 TO FUND PARTNERSHIP PROVIDING ROBOTICS EDUCATION THROUGHOUT RURAL NEVADA

CARSON CITY, NV – December 20, 2018

The Office of Science, Innovation and Technology (OSIT) has partnered with FIRST Nevada, The Robotics Engineering & Competition (REC) Foundation, and Tesla to develop and grow robotics education in rural Nevada. The partnership is made possible by a generous grant of \$100,350 from the William N. Pennington Foundation.

“Access to high-quality STEM education is important no matter where you live,” said **Brian Mitchell, OSIT Director**. “I’m excited to work with our partners to help local students in rural schools gain an interest in STEM and the skills needed for in-demand, high-paying careers. I would like to thank the Pennington Foundation for their generous support in these efforts.”

“FIRST Nevada is thrilled to partner with the Governor's Office of Science, Innovation & Technology and Tesla to provide these exciting robotics programs to more schools and students in NV thanks to the generosity of the Pennington Foundation,” said **Angela Quick, FIRST Nevada Regional Director**. “We are grateful for this partnership and our aligned vision to provide accessibility to these engaging, mentor-based STEM programs and inspire the next generation of science and technology leaders.”

“Demand for STEM jobs in Nevada will continue to grow in the coming years,” said **Chris Reilly, workforce development and education programs lead at Tesla**. “We are excited to collaborate with OSIT, FIRST Nevada and The REC Foundation to help students gain exposure and access to STEM fields wherever they go to school.”

Funding from this grant will help establish 93 robotics teams at 54 schools across nine Northern Nevada districts. An estimated 800 to 1,000 students in elementary, middle, and high schools will participate in programs from VEX Robotics and FIRST Nevada, one of the leading STEM organizations in the state.

According to a statewide survey of schools conducted by OSIT, only 27 percent of rural schools offer STEM activities either during or after school compared to 47 percent during school and 43 percent after school in urban areas. Grant funding will help close the urban-rural STEM equity and access gap, increase student interest and engagement in STEM, and help prepare students for careers requiring problem solving, teamwork, and critical thinking skills.

The commitments of other partners are key to the success of this program. For every VEX Robotics kit purchased by the Pennington Foundation, the REC Foundation has committed to match the funding and purchase an additional kit. As a part of its five-year commitment to growing STEM education throughout Nevada, Tesla will support the project by funding professional development for teachers and

sustainment funding across both FIRST and VEX programs to set up a foundation for the long-term success of this initiative.

About OSIT

The mission of OSIT is to coordinate, support, and align efforts by K-12 and higher education, workforce development and employers to improve science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education and STEM workforce development so that Nevada's workforce can meet the demands of its growing economy.

About FIRST

FIRST is a national non-profit "inspiring youth to become science and technology leaders and innovators." Over 460,000 students participate in FIRST in 85 countries. FIRST is one of the 16 programs on Nevada's list of recommended STEM programs. Students that participate in FIRST programs are more likely to show gains in STEM interest, knowledge, postsecondary STEM study, and careers. These gains are more pronounced in female students when compared to control groups at the same school. Regardless of the STEM field in which FIRST alumni choose to work, they exhibit strong teamwork, communication, innovation, and other 21st Century work-life skills.

About the Pennington Foundation - The William N. Pennington Foundation was formed by the late William N. Pennington, a gaming industry pioneer and philanthropist, and provides grants to Northern Nevada based organizations in the areas of education, community services, health care, and medical research. The foundation also supports the community and health services for children and the elderly, as well as providing financial aid to students in colleges and universities.

###