

National Lab Day Launches – President Obama Applauds Initiative, Calls for New Era In Hands-On Science, Technology Learning *200 Organizations, 6.5 Million Professionals Partner In Effort*

WASHINGTON, D.C. Nov. 23, 2009 – A coalition of educators, science and engineering associations, philanthropies and other organizations today announced the launch of National Lab Day, a new grassroots initiative designed to reinvigorate science and math education in the nation's schools and after-school programs and lead to increased U.S. competitiveness.

President Obama applauded the education initiative and others in a speech at the White House today. "Lifting American students from the middle to the top of the pack in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) achievement over the next decade will not be attained by government alone," he said. "I applaud the substantial commitments made today by the leaders of companies, universities, foundations, non-profits and organizations representing millions of scientists, engineers and teachers from across the country."

National Lab Day aims to inspire a wave of future innovators and foster U.S. competitiveness by improving the quality STEM education in America. A collaboration between government and more than 200 public- and private-sector organizations, National Lab Day will connect students in grades 6-12 to hands-on learning experiences and promote tinkering in laboratory settings.

Among the organizations that have pledged support for National Lab Day are the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the National Science Teachers Association, the National Science Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Jack D. Hidary Foundation, the American Chemistry Society, the National Institutes of Health; and the Business Roundtable. Together they represent more than 6.5 million professionals and educators.

National Lab Day will promote hands-on learning throughout the year and culminate each year with special events the first week of May. Volunteer science and technology professionals and educators will work together with students to improve America's science labs and offer inquiry-based STEM experiences in classrooms, learning labs, and after-school programs.

"We wouldn't teach football from a textbook," said John P. Holdren, President Obama's science advisor. "It is even more important that America's youth have the opportunity to learn math and science by doing. The President and I strongly support efforts to raise the level of project-based learning, to help cultivate the next generation of doers and makers."

(Continued . . .)

National Lab Day

Jack D. Hidary, chairman of National Lab Day, praised President Obama's announcement. "Our children deserve a world class science and math education that includes exciting, hands-on lab experiences," said Hidary. "Whether you are a Nobel-prize winning scientist, a Mythbusters fan, a tinkerer or a parent, you can help bring students the enjoyment of learning through real challenges."

Hidary encouraged others to get involved. A website – www.NationalLabDay.org – launches today to invite volunteer science and technology professionals as well as educators and others to sign up to participate. The website will automatically match volunteers to requests from educators to participate on the basis of geography and interests. The website also provides resources and ideas for hands-on learning experiments and invites the public to suggest new materials.

High Praise for National Lab Day Efforts

Thomas H. Lane, president of the American Chemical Society, said that National Lab Day would "elevate hands-on learning to an entirely new level in this country. Improving the ability of our young people to excel in science and technology is absolutely essential if we are to compete successfully in the global economy."

Dr. Francis Eberle, executive director of the National Science Teachers Association, said that "bringing together scientists, engineers and teachers in this nationwide volunteer initiative to improve labs and inquiry-based science experiences for middle level and high school students will have immediate effects on the classroom and instill a passion for and an appreciation of science, technology, engineering and mathematics in our nation's young people."

"We are pleased to partner with National Lab Day and to align our \$2 million dollar annual competition *Reimagining Learning* with its goals," said Robert Gallucci, the MacArthur Foundation's president. "Digital media are the learning labs of the 21st century and, through the competition, which launches today, educators, designers and entrepreneurs will respond to President Obama's call to provide hands on experiences that spark young people's interest and creativity."

"Science, technology, engineering and mathematics education is a core pathway to college-readiness--one that has not always been available, especially to historically underserved students," said Vicki Phillips, director of education at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. "By engaging the nation's business, science, technology, and education leaders, by tapping into their know-how and resources, National Lab Day can play a catalytic role in opening the STEM field to all students in a way that reflects high academic standards and exciting real-world relevance."

(Continued . . .)

Contact: Jack Hidary: 917-974-2366; Miro Sutton: 917-750-0303
National Lab Day Inc., 8 West 40th Street, 20th floor, New York, NY, 10010
www.NationalLabDay.org

National Lab Day

John J. Castellani, president of the Business Roundtable, said that “President Obama’s announcement underscores the importance of science and math education in preparing students to succeed throughout their future careers. National Lab Day is an essential step toward reinvigorating students’ enthusiasm for science and math—and for keeping our nation competitive in the global marketplace.”

Technology Companies Promote National Lab Day

“We all have a vested interest in advancing our country’s proficiency in the disciplines of science, technology, engineering and math as a means to driving innovation and jobs – which are key to fueling our economic growth and global competitiveness,” said Steve Ballmer, CEO of Microsoft. “Microsoft applauds President Obama for making STEM a priority, and we are committed to working with others in business, government and the educational field to enhance and leverage U.S. leadership in information technology.”

“Science and engineering hold the key to economic growth and to solving the challenges facing our country in areas like energy, health care, and national security,” said Rich Templeton, CEO of Texas Instruments. “The President’s STEM initiative is an important step forward in addressing these challenges. National Lab Day is a creative approach to engaging young minds on these critical disciplines.”

John Donovan, chief technology officer of AT&T, said: “AT&T is pleased to pledge its support to National Lab Day and its mission to advance math and science education. The more than 1,200 researchers and engineers of AT&T Labs have a long history of university collaboration and volunteer support of educational programs at all levels. Through the National Lab Day initiative, our researchers will have new opportunities to share their passion for knowledge with a new generation, serving as direct resources for educators in developing and delivering high-impact lessons and lab experiences.”

Several companies are helping with the National Lab Day web platform, including Pivotal Labs, which develops online platforms that foster innovation, ePals Inc., a social network optimized for K-12 learning, Donors Choose, an online platform for teachers to connect directly with donors, and Maker Faire, which is supplying project designs and ideas for the site.

####

National Lab Day (www.NationalLabDay.org) is a New York-based educational organization dedicated to improving science and math education across the country. More than 200 organizations representing 6.5 million professionals and educators have already pledged support for National Lab Day. These organizations have sent a letter to the President (available at the above web address) detailing their commitment. National Lab Day welcomes new partnerships and can be reached at info@nationallabday.org.

Contact: Jack Hidary: 917-974-2366; Miro Sutton: 917-750-0303
National Lab Day Inc., 8 West 40th Street, 20th floor, New York, NY, 10010
www.Nationallabday.org