



IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 12, 2015

Contact:
Anne Holland, 720-974-5876
STEM Conference Manager
aholland@spacescience.org

Public Libraries & STEM Conference to Take Place August 20-22

BOULDER, Colo.—August 12, 2015— Libraries across the country have been reimagining their community role and leveraging their resources and public trust to strengthen community-based learning and foster critical thinking, problem solving, and engagement in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). The Space Science Institute’s *National Center for Interactive Learning* (NCIL), in partnership with the Lunar and Planetary Institute (LPI), received funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for the first-ever *Public Libraries & STEM* conference that will take place at the Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel, August 20-22, 2015. Conference co-conveners are Dr. Paul Dusenbery (NCIL) and Keliann LaConte (LPI).

The conference will bring library and STEM professionals and funders together to build productive relationships; explore promising practices in designing effective programs; help define a new 21st Century vision of STEM learning in public libraries; and develop the foundation for a future evaluation and research agenda for libraries and their partners engaged in STEM education efforts. The conference’s work and published proceedings will inform future development of informal STEM learning programs in libraries and their communities. The conference is expected to attract over 150 participants.

“Building the capacity of public libraries and library staff to deliver engaging, inspirational and educational STEM programs has the potential to transform the STEM education landscape across the country. What started in libraries several years ago as independent experiments in STEM programming has become a national STEM movement,” says Dr. Paul Dusenbery, Director of NCIL located in Boulder, Colorado. Dusenbery is also the Project Director for the STAR Library Education Network (STAR_Net) that provides interactive STEM exhibits, programming, and training to public libraries and library staff nationwide.

The conference organizers thank NSF and local conference sponsors in Colorado (Morgridge Family Foundation, Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Condit, KEVA Planks, Denver Public Library, National Renewable Energy Lab, and Google) for support of this event and STEM education.

Susan Hildreth, Executive Director of the Peninsula Library System and former Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, points out that “STEM education and libraries are natural partners for achieving 21st century learning in our communities. This inaugural STEM conference creates an effective platform to share best practices and create opportunities for even greater impact.”

About the National Center for Interactive Learning

The Space Science Institute’s *National Center for Interactive Learning* (NCIL) is dedicated to expanding the understanding and participation of families, youth, teachers, and citizens in science and technology (www.nc4il.org). We foster collaboration between STEM professionals and educators to bring the wonder of science and engineering directly to people. Our programs span a range of audience needs and delivery methods, including traveling museum and public library exhibitions; award-winning educational films, videos, and websites; hands-on teaching resources and activities; and educator workshops. Our programs are designed to be accessible to all, and to inspire the next generation of STEM innovators. More than 450,000 people visit our traveling exhibits every year and more than 750,000 use our educational websites. Our programs have a positive impact on rural and urban communities nationwide and reach underserved audiences with inspirational, fun, and innovative STEM activities.

#####