CareerSpark STEAM Expo Shines Spotlight on STEAM Careers

by Jennifer Jennings
April 26 2024 10:34 AM

SPRINGFIELD – Governor JB Pritzker had proclaimed the month of April as Innovation and Technology Month in Illinois. To celebrate this, the Illinois Department of Innovation & Technology (DoIT) co-hosted the first CareerSpark STEAM Expo in Springfield. This hands-on, interactive work and career readiness experience for 8th grade students, inspired more than 700 students from nine school districts representing Central Illinois to explore exciting careers in the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) fields.

"It was great to see a spark in curiosity of young minds as they interacted with exhibits and explored the Expo," said Illinois Department of Innovation & Technology Acting Secretary and CIO Sanjay Gupta. "This event provided a platform for them to explore their interests, discover new possibilities, and open their mind to a future in the STEAM fields. We're eager to provide more opportunities for Illinois students in the future."

The event saw enthusiastic participation from students, professionals, and industry creating an atmosphere of inspiration, exploration and learning. Students used the opportunity to engage in hands-on activities, interact with industry experts, and gain valuable insights from more than 50 exhibits into the world of STEAM careers.

"We know that 8th grade is a critical time in career exploration for young people as they prepare for high school," said Junior Achievement of Central Illinois President Mary Pille. "The CareerSpark STEAM Expo provides vital opportunities for students to not just envision, but actively engage with diverse career paths, igniting their curiosity as they plan their own path to success."

DoIT extends its gratitude to all the participants, volunteers, and collaborators who contributed to the success of the CareerSpark STEAM Expo. For additional information and other STEAM events, visit DoIT's STEAM page at www.illinois.gov/doit-steam.