

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

NEWS

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Illinois State Receives ‘STEM’ Grant from Governor’s Office

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Gov. Pat Quinn announced today that Illinois State University will receive a one-year \$50,000 grant to lead the creation of an Energy Learning Exchange.

The Exchange, a public-private partnership working toward advances in energy, will have the support of Illinois State’s Center for Mathematics, Science and Technology as well as the University’s Institute for Regulatory Policy Studies and the Center for Renewable Energy.

The grant is part of a \$10.3 million effort of the Governor’s Office to better prepare thousands of Illinois students for careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fields.

David Loomis, director of Illinois State’s Center for Renewable Energy, joined Quinn and other leaders in Illinois business, high-tech industry and education at the innovative “1871” digital start-up center in Chicago’s Merchandise Mart. Gov. Quinn announced that Illinois State was one of eight organizations that will be awarded contracts to develop “STEM Learning Exchanges” that link educational opportunities with business resources to prepare students to compete in the global economy. The partnership is part the governor’s commitment to improve education in Illinois.

“Our mission is to prepare our students for the 21st Century workforce,” Gov. Quinn said. “These new Learning Exchanges will provide students with real-world experience and advanced educational opportunities to ensure they are ready to compete for the jobs of tomorrow.”

The funding package is comprised of \$2.3 million in federal Race to the Top funds, which leveraged another \$8 million in business resources. The eight STEM Learning Exchanges, coordinated through multiple state agencies in partnership with the Illinois Business Roundtable, will be established through contracts with the Illinois State Board of Education. Applicants were required to commit cash or in-kind donations, bringing more than \$10.3 million of business resources and cash to this unique public-private partnership.

The eight learning exchange organizations were selected by an expert review committee that considered each applicant’s plan and experience in coordinating statewide public-private partnerships, and the matching or in-kind matching contribution. These statewide Learning Exchanges will work together with regional, educational and business networks to aggregate curricular resources, assessment tools, professional development systems, work-based learning opportunities and problem-based learning challenges. They will support performance evaluation across the P-20 education and workforce system, and result in better prepared students for a 21st century workforce.