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NEWS RELEASE

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Libraries Lead the Maker Movement in Idaho

BOISE, ID – Idaho has joined the Maker Movement by launching Makerspaces in five public libraries across the state. Spaces have been created at five pilot project libraries representing diverse geographic regions as well as rural and urban communities: the Meridian Library District; Ada Community Library, Victory Branch; Gooding Public Library; Snake River School/Community Library in Blackfoot; and Community Library Network, Hayden Lake.

“Make It at the Library,” a pilot project implemented in 2012–2013 by the Idaho Commission for Libraries, provides the necessary materials and trainings for library staff to implement creative, STEAM-based programming (science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics) for tweens and teens. Included are tools to build simple robots and other creations—with 3-D printers soon to be added to the toolkit—as well as training on tools/technology, leveraging partnerships, involving community, and evaluating outcomes.

“A makerspace is a place where people come together to create and collaborate, to share resources and knowledge,” said Erica Compton, a projects coordinator at the Commission. “The pilot project is initially focusing on engaging teens through makerspace activities, including formal and ‘stealth’ programming that incorporates engineering, robotics, electronics, and other STEAM topics to draw teens into these innovative spaces. The makerspaces will eventually be available to the entire community as the project evolves.” The project is designed to support the creation of makerspaces in the five pilot Idaho libraries and encourage the delivery of library services to digital users “where they live.”

Compton and participating staff from the pilot libraries recently presented the project nationally at the American Library Association Annual Conference (<http://ala13.ala.org/node/12223>) to captivated attendees and in Idaho at the Boise Mini Maker Faire.

The “Make It at the Library” project is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services. See more on the Idaho Commission for Libraries website at <http://libraries.idaho.gov/make-it-idaho> and on their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/MakeltIdaho>.

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The Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL) assists libraries to build the capacity to better serve their clientele. To learn more about ICfL, visit <http://libraries.idaho.gov>.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation’s 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. Through grant making, policy development, and research, IMLS helps communities and individuals thrive through broad public access to knowledge, cultural heritage, and lifelong learning.