The Iowa Governor’s STEM Advisory Council and Kemin Industries have announced the recipients of the 2023 Iowa STEM Teacher Award, sponsored by Kemin Industries.

The North Central STEM region’s honoree is Brittany Zimpfer, K-5 STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, math) Instructor at Rock Run Elementary School in Iowa Falls, Iowa. She was recognized for her work in connecting STEAM principles to general education courses throughout her school.
In creating this collaborative curriculum, Ms. Zimpfer focuses on incorporating problem-solving, perseverance, and fun at a developmentally appropriate level. Throughout all her classes, Ms. Zimpfer stresses the importance of learning to fail well. She celebrates classroom failures and recognizes when students take big risks and big ideas that fail, to help inspire courage and creativity.

Ms. Zimpfer connects a STEM career to every unit she teaches to give her students more examples of what a STEM career can look like, focusing on sharing photos and videos of diverse backgrounds. Ms. Zimpfer noted in her application that she does this so students see someone like themselves achieving their goals, and can more easily picture themselves achieving their personal dreams.

In addition to all her classroom work, Ms. Zimpfer planned and implemented Rock Run’s first STEM Night earlier this school year where families had the opportunity to explore the hands-on, problem-solving tools students are learning in her STEAM classroom.

Now in its ninth year, the Iowa STEM Teacher Award is given annually to one full-time, licensed preK-12 teacher from each of the six STEM regions in Iowa. Each recipient is honored for their efforts to foster enthusiasm and inspire a passion for STEM that goes beyond the classroom and helps prepare students for future high-demand careers.

As a recipient of the 2023 Iowa STEM Teacher Award presented by Kemin Industries, Zimpfer will receive $1,500 to use for her classroom and $1,500 for personal use. She recently received her award and a small celebration at her school and will later be honored, along with her fellow recipients, in a recognition ceremony during STEM day at the Fair at the Iowa State Fair. For more information about the award and all current and previous recipients, please visit https://iowastem.org/teacheraward.
Checkout Library Unveiling

Storytime STEM-Packs and various other STEM kits are now available for checkout. These packs are a great hands on, creative way for students to learn more about various STEM concepts.

Learn more about available kits here: Stem Pack Checkout Information

Request a kit here: Check-Out Form

STEM Day at the Capitol

Programs of Iowa’s STEM Council inspire STEM teaching that gives students the technical and intellectual tools they need to connect what they learn in the classroom with real-world applications. High demand STEM jobs in business and industry across the state make STEM study an essential economic development force too.

At STEM Day at the Capitol on February 8, Iowa's STEM programs that are shaping future citizens and workers were prominently featured. The Capitol Rotunda was filled with STEM exhibits to showcase the significant influence STEM Council programs have had on youth and educators all around the state. The exhibits included STEM BEST Program models, Computer Science is Elementary project schools, STEM Scale-Up Programs, the Iowa STEM Teacher Externships Program, and more.

Sponsored by Collins Aerospace, STEM Day opened with a call from executive director
Jeff Weld for the day to be an annual demonstration to investors, Iowa legislators, of the return on investment (ROI) they’ve come to expect. Students who take part in STEM programs “find their passion and purpose,” said Weld, “for about $63 dollars per participant.”

Senators Chris Cournoyer (R) and Eric Giddens (D) shared with attendees their enthusiasm for STEM both as STEM professionals outside of their elected roles, as well as within the Senate as STEM education advocates.

Council co-chair Diane Young of Cherokee offered her perspective as a business leader and community champion for STEM as the engine of vitalization at the local and statewide levels. And Adriana Johnson, Head of Corporate Social Responsibility at Collins Aerospace, reminded attendees of the dependence that Iowa employers like hers have on the success of STEM Council programs and others that are preparing tomorrow’s innovators.

To view photos and videos from STEM Day at the Capitol, visit the STEM Council Facebook page.

Regional STEM Festivals Engage Families

Students and parents had the chance to try out the Cubetto at Alden Elementary STEAM Night.

Over the past month, the North Central STEM Hub has helped bring engaging, hands on STEM activities to youth and their families at two STEM festivals. Area businesses and organizations bring representatives as well to exhibit which helps students learn of STEM careers in the area. These festivals have been very well attended and overall help increase interest in not only STEM content but also those career paths. If you are
interested in having a STEM festival, please reach out to NC STEM Region Manager, Mauree Haage at mhaage@iastate.edu.

Bee-bots were a popular hands on activity at Fellows Elementary Science Night.
Meet Our Newest Board Member: Kidron Knox!
• Can you describe your background?

I grew up in a small town in Eastern Iowa, and have spent most of my life living in the State of Iowa. I graduated from Washington High School in Cherokee, Iowa in 2004. After graduation, I worked for several years in various full-time roles where I learned about the trades and got an introduction to contracting and construction. After several years of full-time work, I attended college and graduated from Iowa State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemical Engineering. During that time, I worked as a Research Associate and developed several successful engineering projects. After graduating, I worked for several years full-time in the biofuels and agriculture fields in various engineering and management roles. I spent several years working in Contract Development and Manufacturing of human drugs. I currently work for a Company out of Pleasant Hill, Iowa as their Vice President of Operations, Engineering, and Strategy. I reside on an acreage near Greene, Iowa, and have four children: Piper, Jordan, Paige, and Prue.

• What kind of work or projects are you currently working on?

I am currently finishing the final class of my MBA through the University of Iowa. In addition to that, I am busy working on engineering projects and many production/operations improvement projects within Riley Resource Group.

• What do you like most about your job?

I like the blend of technical problem-solving and working with teams of people.

• What achievement or contribution are you most proud of?

I am most proud of authoring and co-authoring several patents that are being used actively in the industry today within the biofuels market spaces.

• Why did you decide to become a member of the North Central Advisory Board?


I am very excited to be a part of encouraging the youth in Iowa during their STEM education, and I would like to bring some real-world engineering practice and perspective to STEM programs in the state.

- **What message around STEM do you communicate with those around you?**

STEM education is absolutely vital in the Midwest. Skills gained through STEM education can be used throughout a lifetime.

- **What action or “first step” can individuals or communities do to promote STEM?**

Encouraging curiosity and scientific experimentation as part of play for children during development can really help orient their young minds to what STEM is all about.

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**Upcoming STEM Events!**

- March 7 - NC STEM Advisory Board Meeting
- March 23 - Osage STEAM Festival
- April 1 - Boone STEM Festival at DMACC - Boone Campus
- April 7 - STEM Scale-Up Awardees Announced
- April 20 - Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Board Meeting
- May 11 - NC STEM Advisory Board Meeting
**Connect with us!**

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