



Office of Lieutenant Governor Jari Askins
State of Oklahoma
State Capitol, Suite 211
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

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Contact: Kim Roberts

Office: 405-521-2161

E-mail: kim.roberts@ltgov.state.ok.us

**Lieutenant Governor Askins Promotes Enhanced STEM Education through
'Real World Design Challenge' Partnership**

OKLAHOMA CITY – Lieutenant Governor Jari Askins announced on Tuesday the Real World Design Challenge, a partnership that will significantly boost science, technology, engineering and mathematics education (STEM) in Oklahoma.

The program, a partnership between the state of Oklahoma, U.S. Department of Energy, Federal Aviation Administration, Parametric Technology Corporation, Hewlett-Packard Corporation, Business Educational Partnerships Group and Flometrics, Inc., will provide free access to some of the world's most advanced mechanical engineering and design software to any interested school as part of a national design competition.

“The Real World Design Challenge aims to inspire and engage STEM students and teachers while systematically highlighting our potential workers in these fields. This partnership, and the challenge the curriculum presents, will help young Oklahomans obtain the skills they need to succeed and to help Oklahoma's economy and aerospace industry grow,” Askins said.

Governor Brad Henry expressed his enthusiasm for the program, noting the tremendous opportunity for Oklahoma teachers and students.

“A unique and innovative public-private partnership, this helps ensure a state workforce that possesses the science, technology, engineering and math skills needed for Oklahoma to compete in an increasingly competitive global economy. The Real World Design Challenge provides the resources, information and inspiration that will reap dividends for generations to come,” Henry said.

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The aerospace industry faces a critical shortage of engineers. Between 60,000 and 68,000 engineers in the U.S. aerospace industry will retire by 2010 and only half of those will be replaced. With modest growth in the U.S. aerospace industry, there will be a shortage of 40,000 to 85,000 engineers by 2010 and Oklahoma will face a shortage of at least 650 engineers by 2013.

Dr. Ralph Coppola, Director of Worldwide Education for PTC, said that the partnership will help address the growing industry demand for workers in technology, engineering, science and technology.

“The Real World Design Challenge bridges the needs of the industry with the future of education. It teaches innovation, creativity and collaboration using the expertise that industry, government and higher education have been perfecting for decades. With this real world approach to learning, we can keep our workforce strong and ensure America’s prosperity for the future,” Dr. Coppola said.

Coppola said that the challenge is making a long term investment in Oklahoma’s educators. As part of the challenge, each participating teacher receives almost \$1 million in top-of-the-line engineering software to use with their students. Currently, there are \$20 million in donations and a projected \$500 million will be donated to Oklahoma schools.

Sandy Garrett, Superintendent of Public Instruction, commended the program.

“This extraordinary, \$20 million plus opportunity is a prime example of how public and private entities can partner with education to ensure citizens are prepared to prosper and lead in the increasingly STEM-centered global economy,” Garrett said.

“As chair of the Career and Technology Board of Education, I am very pleased Oklahoma has been chosen to benefit from the Real World Design Challenge.”

CareerTech schools, which provide manufacturing, aerospace and engineering education, announced their intention to become a key participant in the program.

“Both adult and high school students in Oklahoma’s CareerTech system will benefit from the software donation and partnerships developed through the Real World Design Challenge. This will be a tremendous advantage for our students and ultimately, Oklahoma’s economy,” said CareerTech Executive Director Dr. Phil Berkenbile.

The challenge will provide high school students and teachers with design and global engineering software and access to DOE and FAA mentors. Student teams will use these resources to create a solution to a real-world problem within the aviation industry.

Teams will be evaluated by industry and education professionals. The winner will represent Oklahoma at the National Real World Design Challenge held in Washington, D.C., where a national winner will be announced.

Schools interested in participating in the Real World Design Challenge may contact State Coordinator Jim Bullington for more information at 405-743-5424 or jbull@okcareertech.org or visit the DOE’s website, www.scied.science.doe.gov/RWDC/index.html.