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Science Foundation Arizona Hires STEM Education Field Representative for Navajo and Apache Counties

PHOENIX (Oct. 1, 2013) – As part of its Rural and Remote Initiative, Science Foundation Arizona (SFAz) has hired Eric Savage, Ph.D. as the full-time STEM education field representative. In this role, he will assist teachers in improving student academic achievement in Navajo and Apache Counties.

In June of this year, SFAz announced [results](#) from a study conducted among educators in Arizona's 13 rural counties. As a result of the study, SFAz identified short term, stopgap actions to provide teachers the tools they need to improve academic achievement and develop the skills to implement Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards. Short-term solutions include:

- 1) Basic supplies and equipment to teachers for classrooms
- 2) Professional development for teachers to further enhance their hands-on and interactive classroom skills
- 3) Common planning time allowing teachers to share their curriculums and coordinate lessons
- 4) After-school programs with a focus on science, mathematics and robotics

As the STEM education field representative for Navajo and Apache Counties, Savage will help ensure these identified needs are met to improve student achievement. Savage will work closely with the schools to assist teachers in improving their science and math teaching skills; provide gift cards for basic supplies for full-time K-12 teachers so long as schools are providing teachers weekly common planning time; assist educators with submitting requests for proposals to SFAz for science and math equipment needs; and provide support to schools for after-school programs in science and math.

This fall, SFAz committed \$15 million over three-years across 13 Arizona counties to help address the problem. Initial focus areas include Apache and Navajo counties, but funding to all counties will continue.

"The rural and remote initiative is a critical component of the work we are doing at SFAz," said John Kriekard, SFAz's director of education programs. "Equally important is providing the assistance schools and teachers need to help students in rural communities gain twenty-first century skills. With Eric's vast knowledge and experience, we will meet the needs of the initiative."

Prior to joining SFAz, Savage served as vice president of educational develop and outreach for First Flight Education, an education-based company providing Common Core and NGSS-aligned curriculum enrichment as well as K-12 teacher professional development. Under his leadership, First Flight

attained education contracts with NASA, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, and proactive K-12 districts in rural and metro Arizona. Savage has been nationally recognized for his achievements with First Flight.

Before working with First Flight Education, Savage worked in higher education for 13 years. During the last five years, he provided safety science graduate-education and research at Embry-Riddle. His research has been featured internationally and nationally. Savage also worked for The Boeing Company as a human factors design engineer within flight operations and systems engineering where he co-engineered platform cockpits and co-managed international programs.

Savage earned his Bachelor of Science degree, Master of Science degree and Ph.D. from Purdue University. His Master's in Business Administration is from Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Additionally, he is a contributing editor for the Transportation Research Board and McGraw-Hill.

About Science Foundation Arizona

Science Foundation Arizona (SFAz) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization initiated in 2006 by the Greater Phoenix Leadership Inc., Southern Arizona Leadership Council and the Flagstaff Forty in conjunction with the executive and legislative branches of state government. SFAz serves as a catalyst for high-wage, knowledge-based jobs and economic diversity through administration and strict oversight of research, development and education grants to public education and other non-profit research performing institutions. For more information, visit www.sfaz.org.

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