

Phillips66 \$85,000 STEM Grant will help fund the University Center's "CREATE" Lab

(Press Release)

PONCA CITY, OK. – Phillips 66 announced a grant to fund programs that will further Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) opportunities – helping to foster the next generation of innovators in Ponca City. The announcement was made today at the University Center at Ponca City (UC). Phillips66 will provide \$85,000 in grant funding for the UC's "CREATE" Lab. The "CREATE" Lab is an acronym for Construction, Resource, Engineering, and Technology Environment which will be located in the UC. The grant will help build upon the highly successful UC LEGO Summer robotics and computer coding academies in the past year.

In 2018, the UC, with assistance from the UC Foundation, funded the first LEGO robotics/computer coding academy. The Academy was open to twenty incoming 6th – 8th graders for a week of half day experiences and challenges. At the conclusion of the summer the UC saw the demand for the program soar to 78 students from a dozen different communities participating over four separate weeks.

"STEM education is vital to the future of our state and local workforce, and we saw the hunger from our community for these opportunities for their children" said Adam Leaming, president and CEO of the University Center. "This grant will enable students in Ponca City and the surrounding areas to expand their STEM exposure with building upon our highly successful summer and afterschool programs."



Pictured: L to R Lee Evans, UC Foundation chair, Darin Fields Phillips 66 Refinery Manager, and Adam Leaming UC CEO, standing behind a few of the LEGO Robotic builds crafted by local participants in this year's afterschool program.

Lee Evans, the UC Foundation chair commented, "We cannot thank Phillips 66 enough for their tremendous support of the University Center and our community. This incredibly generous grant will allow the University Center to greatly expand the current STEM Education Opportunities at the University Center with the formation of the CREATE Lab. This grant is a game changer for students and STEM Education opportunities in our area."

The P66 grant funds will allow the UC to effectively double the capacity for students in its summer academies and afterschool programs. Funds will be utilized to purchase additional LEGO robotics kits and expansion packs. In addition to the robotics kits students also gain access twelve 3D printers. The UC staff will work to incorporate programs in 3D printing and design in the CREATE lab.

"STEM is a growing industry in our state, and we need to make sure that our students have the exposure and experience they need to be successful," said Adam Leaming. "The CREATE Lab is the first step for the UC in creating an environment for students to acquire hands-on learning opportunities and experience they need to get a jumpstart on their future and compete for these jobs of tomorrow."

"Phillips 66 supports STEM education and views this program at the University Center as an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of students, not only in Ponca City, but the surrounding area", said Darin Fields, Phillips66 Ponca City Refinery Manger. "We look forward to the Create Lab challenging students and encouraging them to take more STEM classes in their respective schools and realize that they can have fun with science, technology, engineering and math" Fields further stated.

Over the period of the grant, the UC has set a goal to see students in grades 5-12 being engaged with the CREATE Lab. The UC intends to bring more equipment and collaborative opportunities for students and the community to work hand in hand in this engaging STEM environment. For companies or groups interested in participating in this program, they should reach out to Adam Leaming, president and CEO of the University Center at Ponca City, at 580-718-5600.