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**New STEM-Focused Boy Scouts Program Piloted Locally Goes National**  
*STEM Scouts began in East Tennessee last spring*

Knoxville (April 15, 2015) - An after-school STEM education program, piloted in East Tennessee by the Great Smoky Mountain Council of the Boy Scouts of America, will now be offered in other parts of the country. STEM Scouts, which encourages interest in science, technology, engineering and math through fun hands-on learning and interaction with STEM professionals, will be expanding to 12 other Boy Scouts of America councils starting this fall.

“We’ve been thrilled to be able to offer STEM Scouts in the Great Smoky Mountain Council this last year,” said Great Smoky Mountain Council Scout Executive David Williams. “It’s been great for the youth, the parents, the volunteers and our staff. We’ve had a lot of fun and introduced a lot of new families to the world of Scouting.”

By increasing STEM learning opportunities and establishing partnerships with businesses and universities, STEM Scouts gives young people real experience in these fields and the opportunity to work one-on-one with STEM educators and experts. The program is open to boys and girls in grades 3 through 12.

“As one of the leading youth-serving organizations, we have a responsibility to provide young people with new, relevant and fresh programs and experiences that will have long-lasting impacts on their lives,” said Wayne Brock, BSA’s Chief Scout Executive. “Today’s youth crave hands-on learning experiences and STEM Scouts fills that need while honoring Scouting’s proven and impactful values and ideals. The success of the pilot program has given our movement direction on how we continue to innovate our programs and help youth rethink how Scouting can impact their lives.”

“STEM Scouts has been an incredible program for our council,” said Williams. “We’ve been able to reach youth who wouldn’t normally think about Scouting and youth who may have been in our traditional Scouting programs but left for one reason or another. Our goal at the Great Smoky Mountain Council is to help instill values in young people and prepare them to achieve their full potential in life. STEM Scouts has been a great way to realize that goal.”

UT-Battelle, LLC, which operates Oak Ridge National Laboratory for the Department of Energy, served as the chartered organization for most of the STEM Labs in the local pilot program.

"UT-Battelle has a long-standing partnership with the Boy Scouts of America, as well as an enduring commitment to enhance STEM education opportunities in our region," said Community Relations Manager Leigha Edwards. "So it was a natural fit for us to help bring STEM Scouts to all interested kids in East Tennessee."

STEM Scouts launches at a time when careers in STEM-related fields are on the rise. The weekly activities provide new and fun ways to learn about STEM outside of the classroom with the goal of establishing a long-term interest in one of these rapidly growing fields.

"We continue to align our outreach efforts to engage children today in a way that better prepares them for the workforce needs of tomorrow," said Edwards. "We are so pleased that even more kids across the nation will now have the opportunity to participate in this exciting new program."

STEM Scouts started in East Tennessee in spring 2014 and currently serves nearly 400 local youth in 19 schools and afterschool programs across the region. In February, the Boy Scouts of America National Executive Board voted to expand the pilot program to 12 other councils in the United States.

The STEM Scouts program will be expanded to the following councils:

- Crossroads American Council (Indianapolis, IN)
- Circle Ten Council (Dallas, TX)
- Sam Houston Area Council (Houston, TX)
- Greater St. Louis Area Council (St. Louis, MO)
- Denver Area Council (Denver, CO)
- Connecticut Rivers Council (East Hartford, CT)
- Middle Tennessee Council (Nashville, TN)
- Austin, Capitol Area Council (Austin, TX)
- Garden State Council (Wetampton, NJ)
- Pathway to Adventure Council (Chicago, IL)
- Catalina Council (Tucson, AZ)
- Samoset Council (Weston, WI)

For more information on STEM Scouts, including information on signing up for Labs, please go to [stemscouts.org](http://stemscouts.org).

#### About the Great Smoky Mountain Council

The Great Smoky Mountain Council of the Boy Scouts of America works to serve others by helping instill values in young people and in other ways prepare them to make ethical choices over their lifetime in achieving their full potential. The council serves several thousand youth in the core program of Cub Scouting, the foundation for the character and values programs of Scouting. The council serves over 10,300 young people.

### About STEM Scouts

STEM Scouts started in East Tennessee in 2014 to provide fun and exciting opportunities for elementary through high school students in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). It encourages the natural curiosity of children and their sense of wonder about different STEM fields. This program is designed to place emphasis on showing youth how to apply STEM in their everyday lives, develop leadership skills and encourages them to use those experiences in a future career by giving them the opportunity to connect with STEM professionals. It is designed to be fast-paced, thought-provoking and, most importantly, fun.