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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*Association of Science-Technology Centers  
Issues Challenge*

**President Highlights *Youth Inspired* in White House Announcement  
on STEM Education**



WASHINGTON, D.C. (September 16, 2010) – The Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC) today announced the *Youth Inspired Challenge*, a major new initiative designed to expand the impact of science centers and museums to assist the nation’s youth to become the innovative and creative thinkers needed for the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce. Inspired by President Barack Obama’s goal of strengthening the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) knowledge of America’s students, the *Challenge* – extended to more than 300 science centers in all 50 states – sets a three-year goal to engage thousands of youth, ages 10-19, in 2 million hours of science enrichment.

Today, the President offered his support for the effort: "Our success as a nation depends on strengthening America’s role as the world’s engine of discovery and innovation," said President Obama. "I applaud the Association of Science-Technology Centers and its members for lending their resources, expertise, and their enthusiasm to the task of strengthening America’s leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> century by improving education in science, technology, engineering and math."

ASTC member institutions offer valuable science education and youth employment programs outside the classroom. Building on these programs, the goals of *Youth Inspired* include:

- Increasing the STEM literacy of America’s students
- Expanding opportunities for STEM engagement of underrepresented groups, including minorities and women
- Moving America’s students from the middle to the front of the pack in STEM achievement over the next decade

"It is an opportunity tragically missed if we fail to spark the interests of our young people in all that science has to offer," states ASTC chief executive officer Anthony "Bud" Rock. "For this reason, science centers and museums located in communities throughout the country are providing unique educational programs that excite, energize, and enrich our understanding of science and its many applications. Our challenge is to provide more of these enriching opportunities to more students in more communities across America. Inspiration is not restricted to the youth who benefit from these learning opportunities, but also to the many people who work to ensure the continued successes of our science centers and museums everywhere."

ASTC and its member institutions will also collect, catalog, and share best practices for improving STEM literacy for all youth, and will measure and report success based on participation and reach of programs in specific audiences.



Through its network of local science centers and museums, ASTC is committed to doing its part to meet the President's challenge of growing STEM proficiency with America's youth.

The Association of Science-Technology Centers Incorporated is a nonprofit organization of science centers and museums dedicated to furthering public engagement with science among increasingly diverse audiences. Science centers are sites for informal learning, and are places to discover, explore, and test ideas about STEM. They feature interactive exhibits, hands-on science experiences for children, professional development opportunities for teachers, and educational programs for adults. ASTC has nearly 600 members, including 444 operating or developing science centers and museums in 44 countries, who engage over 80 million people annually in intriguing educational science activities and explorations of scientific phenomena.

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