

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Governor Terry E. Branstad ★ Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday, September 24, 2014
Contact: Lt. Governor's Office, 515-725-3518

**Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds announces Statewide STEM
Female Mentoring Effort**
Iowa viewed as national model for other states to follow

(DES MOINES) – Today, Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds was joined by STEMconnector CEO Edie Fraser, Drake University Athletic Director Sandy Hatfield-Clubb, Iowa Association of Business and Industry President Mike Ralston, and Jana Rieker, Bankers Trust Vice President of Sales and Marketing, at a news conference in the Iowa Statehouse Rotunda.

Reynolds announced a national public-private model on ways to engage thousands of mentors for young girls and women to actively pursue STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education and careers.

The first statewide model of its kind, [Million Women Mentors \(MWM\)-Iowa](#), targets 5,000 female and male mentors from all 99 counties in the next four years.

“Launching MWM-Iowa is another component of our statewide-strategy to attract individuals to STEM careers. In particular, I believe mentors can guide, encourage, and open doors for girls and young women to be fully equipped for the great jobs of tomorrow in STEM-related careers.”

In the United States, STEM is a driving force behind economic growth, stability and educational success. That’s why, we’re creating an environment in Iowa that prepares all of our students with the necessary skills to compete in a global knowledge-based economy,” stated Reynolds.

Additional announcements made by Lt. Governor Reynolds at the news conference included: naming Ralston and Rieker as MWM-Iowa co-chairs. She also recognized 12 other individuals as members of the MWM-Iowa Executive Council.

Rieker emphasized the quality opportunities that await Iowa girls and young women in STEM fields. “In the past 10 years, growth in STEM jobs has been three times greater than non-STEM jobs. Also, women with STEM jobs earn 33 percent more than females in non-STEM jobs.

“We know 80 percent of the fastest growing occupations in the United States depend upon mastery of mathematics and scientific knowledge and skills. Being able to secure 5,000 female and male mentors in Iowa to urge young girls and women to consider STEM fields is a huge step forward in increasing awareness and generating excitement,” said Rieker

Co-Chair Mike Ralston agreed. “It’s a tribute to Iowa on how many major companies stepped up to pledge mentors in the past 30 days. We have 13 companies that pledged more than 1,200 mentors together, so we’re already well on our way toward our goal of 5,000.”

The following companies have made a pledge to MWM-Iowa: Leading the charge is Hy-Vee with a commitment of 500 employees, as well as commitments from Bankers Trust; EMC; Iowa Association of Business and Industry; Meredith Corporation; Principal Corporation; Pella Corporation; Vermeer Manufacturing; and a tremendous commitment from Iowa’s colleges and universities including, Des Moines Area Community College, Drake University, Iowa State University, University of Iowa and University of Northern Iowa,” concluded Ralston.

STEMconnector CEO Edie Fraser, who spearheads the national MWM effort in collaboration with more than 22 sponsors and 56 partners, pointed out that Iowa has been at the forefront of increasing awareness and accessibility of STEM.

“We were extremely pleased to receive Iowa’s pledge of 5,000 mentors for the [MWM](#) national initiative. The MWM-Iowa model will be a great example for other states to emulate in attracting male and female STEM mentors,” said Fraser.

In addition to announcing the MWM-Iowa effort, MWM-Iowa Co-Chairs and Executive Council members, the inaugural “Coaches’ Mentoring Challenge” for women was unveiled. The Challenge is designed for basketball coaches across Iowa to collaborate in recruiting mentors for females interested in STEM. Coaches will reach out to their university, college, or high school campus networks, including their fan base and media in their local communities.

Hatfield-Clubb enthusiastically shared that Iowa State University, University of Iowa, and University of Northern Iowa will be joining Drake University in the Coaches’ Mentoring Challenge for women. In addition, Drake University has pledged 100 mentors to the MWM-Iowa initiative over the next four years.

“Today, I am pleased to share that the first-ever Coaches’ Mentoring Challenge for women in Iowa is being launched to recruit mentors for girls and women interested in STEM. Drake University Women’s Basketball Coach Jennie Baranczyk has been named as the official spokesperson of the Coaches’ Mentoring Challenge” said Hatfield-Clubb.

She went on to say, “Coach Baranczyk will make a personal invitation to all university, college, and high school coaches across the state to join her and her colleagues in this important state-wide initiative.”

The effort officially “tips off” with the start of the NCAA Division I women’s basketball season in November.

For more information about the MWM-Iowa effort, MWM-Iowa Executive Council members, MWM-Iowa company and/or organization mentor pledges or the inaugural female Coaches Challenge, please visit www.mwmia.org.

###

About Million Women Mentors (MWM)-Iowa. Million Women Mentors ([MWM-IA](http://www.mwmia.org)) brings together leaders in business, government, and education to engage girls and young women to understand, develop interest and gain confidence so they can pursue and succeed in STEM courses, degrees, and careers. Created as part of the national Million Women Mentors movement in 2014, the MWM-Iowa initiative seeks to register 5,000 women (and men) in all 99 counties by 2018 to serve as mentors to achieve these three goals: Increase the percentage of high school girls planning to pursue STEM careers; increase the percentage of young women pursuing undergraduate degrees in STEM fields; and increase the percentage of women staying in STEM careers.

About Million Women Mentors (National). MWM is an engagement campaign and national call to action that mobilizes corporations, government entities, non-profit and higher education groups, around the imperative of mentoring girls and young women in STEM fields. Since MWM’s launch in January 2014, nearly 171,400 pledges have been made to mentor girls and young women in STEM skills. The web portal is www.millionwomenmentors.org. Available online is a nationwide call to action to capture pledge commitments from individuals, organizations and companies that have an interest in mentoring.