

Wednesday, September 26, 2012

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Ben Ray Luján of New Mexico’s Third District announced today that Science Education Solutions of Los Alamos will receive a \$2.6 million award from the National Science Foundation. The organization, which is active in a wide range of programs to help learners of all ages discover and understand the world through science, will use the funding to enhance science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education with high school students.

“Educating students in the STEM fields is vital to a stronger economy that depends on innovation and big ideas,” Congressman Luján said. “Our young people need to have the skills and training to compete in a global economy, and this grant will help Science Education Solutions invest in proven methods of enhancing STEM education for our students. Already Science Education Solutions has increased students’ interest in STEM in New Mexico, and these funds will help it expand its important mission.”

The grant, which is estimated to last for five years and provide funding of \$2,697,291, will fund a project entitled, “Creating a Community of Practice Around a Proven Teen Science Cafe Model.” This project will create a professional network for implementing Teen Cafes that engage high school teens in STEM education. The Cafe Scientifique model for engaging adults in science has proven very effective and has been widely implemented. The project will build on a new successful model for Teen Cafes that has been implemented over the past five years in New Mexico and will be scaled up in eight diverse regions across the country. It will also encourage and nurture others wishing to start Cafe programs and join the network.

As a member of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, Luján has focused on strengthening STEM education in New Mexico and across the country. He held a Workforce Development Summit last year to help identify industry workforce needs and discuss how to improve training in STEM fields. Luján has also introduced legislation to improve STEM education through teacher training and enhanced curricula that identifies the skills employers are looking for.

#

