

For immediate release

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Our announcement and program will go live on Facebook Live at 12:30 pm.

<https://www.facebook.com/altoonaschooldistrict>

School District of Altoona selected for fab labs equipment funding

District is one of just 21 selected statewide to receive grant

Altoona WI. April 25, 2017 – The School District of Altoona has received a \$25,000 grant from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) to help expand a fabrication laboratory (“fab lab”) to help students develop the key skills they need to succeed in the workforce.

The grant was presented to the district on Tuesday, April 25, which Governor Scott Walker declared as “Fab Lab Day” in Wisconsin. Among the speakers at the district’s grant ceremony, which was held at the Altoona Intermediate and Middle School, were Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch, Senator Terry Moulton, Representative Kathy Bernier, and Chancellor Bob Meyer, UW-Stout.

“On behalf of the state of Wisconsin, I congratulate the School District of Altoona for being one of 21 recipients statewide of our fab lab grants, which are helping students develop the skills they will need for the jobs of tomorrow,” said Governor Walker. “The School District of Altoona has developed an outstanding plan for its fab lab program that is going to result in more innovation in the classrooms and the community, and WEDC is proud to support the district’s efforts.”

“We are driven to provide our students with cutting edge opportunities to ensure they are equipped to drive their future to success and happiness, whatever that might be. This grant is another step toward making those opportunities a reality,” said Superintendent Dr. Connie Biedron.

WEDC awarded grants to 21 school districts statewide to assist them with equipment purchases for instructional and educational purposes in fab labs, which are high-tech workshops with the latest industry equipment used in a wide range of manufacturing facilities.

WEDC provided grants of up to \$25,000 to individual school districts, or up to \$50,000 to consortiums of two or more districts, for the creation and/or expansion of fab labs. The funds may be used to purchase equipment used for instructional and educational purposes by elementary, middle, junior high, or high school students. Applicants must match the amount of funding provided by WEDC.

This is the second round of funding for the Fab Labs Grants. Governor Walker’s 2015-17 state budget included \$500,000 to fund the initial round of grants. In response to an overwhelming number of applications in that first year, WEDC provided another \$100,000 for the program, and in May 2016, grants of up to \$25,000 were awarded to 25 school districts.

Because of the important role that fab labs play in student training and workforce development, Governor Walker’s 2017-19 budget calls for another \$1 million in fab lab funding over the next two years.

WEDC's fab labs funding helps give students hands-on experience, allowing them to put into practice concepts they have learned in science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics (STEAM) courses.

Fab labs have the potential to benefit individual students, school districts and the state's economy as a whole. For more information, visit www.inwisconsin.com/fablabs

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About the School District of Altoona

Altoona is located in west central Wisconsin in the heart of the Chippewa Valley. Contiguous to Eau Claire, Altoona is a community of 7,321 residents and home to 585 businesses. The City and District have experienced exponential growth in recent years with the addition of major housing, recreational and new business developments. The District is located adjacent to the 8th largest school district in the state by enrollment and, yet, is close to several small rural districts. The District covers 14.7 square miles, serves nearly 1,600 students grades PK-12 and employs 133 certified and 71 non-certified staff. It has a new K-3 elementary school opened in 2016, an innovative 4-5 multi-age project based intermediate school and 6-8 middle school (both renovated in 2016.) The District's 9-12 high school was built in 1988, and remodeled in early 2000 and the summer of 2015. The intermediate, middle and high schools are physically connected, and a remodeled space for the fab-lab was completed in the connected facilities in the fall of 2016.

About the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) leads economic development efforts for the state by advancing and maximizing opportunities in Wisconsin for businesses, communities and people to thrive in a globally competitive environment. Working with more than 600 regional and local partners, WEDC develops and delivers solutions representative of a highly responsive and coordinated economic development network. Visit www.inwisconsin.com or follow WEDC on Twitter @_InWisconsin to learn more.