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**BridgeValley Receives Governor's STEM Initiative Grant**

**South Charleston, W.Va.** — BridgeValley Community and Technical College received a \$3,000 grant from the Governor's STEM Initiative, funding that is housed within the West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts, to support the expansion of BridgeValley's successful Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day program.

"West Virginia needs additional scientists, technicians, and engineers to move our state forward; we need more critical thinkers," said Melissa Thompson, Outreach Director for BridgeValley. "Girl Day gets young people excited about the many opportunities in these areas and discredits the misconception that engineering and related occupations are male-dominated fields. Engineering and science are great activities for students of all ages because they teach critical thinking skills. The ability to assess a problem, identify obstacles, and formulate solutions benefits children in and out of the classroom."

WV Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day introduces young women to many career opportunities that have been traditionally known as male-oriented. By increasing awareness of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) professions and celebrating the past and present engineering achievements by women, these students are provided the knowledge and encouragement to begin laying the foundations to secure their places in the rapidly evolving STEM communities.

BridgeValley is collaborating with Pierpont CTC to host a second Girl Day event later this spring.

BridgeValley hosted WV Introduce a Girl To Engineering Day in Charleston, W.Va. on February 25 with the support of Columbia Pipeline Group, American Electric Power/WiNUP group, DOW, Bayer CropScience, Toyota, ZMM Architects and Engineers, West Virginia American Water, CAS Structural Engineers and West Virginia University Institute of Technology.

Governor's STEM Initiative awarded more than \$150,000 in grant funding to support science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) activities at 54 schools and organizations across the state. The program is designed to support STEM programs, projects and events serving West Virginia students from Pre-K through high school.

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