



North Dakota's Gateway to Science

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 22, 2022

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Demke attends national conferences

NASA STEM Better Together and Association of Science and Technology Centers

Bismarck – Executive Director of North Dakota's Gateway to Science (NDGTS) Beth Demke recently attended two national meetings for STEM education professionals.

The *NASA STEM Better Together 2022: Convene, Connect, Collaborate* occurred August 29 through September 1 in Hampton VA. Demke represented NDGTS and its grant project to engage rural tribal families in North Dakota with NASA space tech. The conference included a tour of Langley Research Center (LaRC), the oldest of NASA's field centers that directly borders Langley Air Force Base. LaRC has focused primarily on aeronautical research, but has also tested space hardware such as the Apollo Lunar Module.

The Association of Science and Technology Centers (ASTC) held its annual meeting in Pittsburgh PA September 12-15. ASTC is a professional membership organization with a vision of increased understanding of and engagement with science and technology among all people and a mission to champion and support science and technology centers and museums and the entire science engagement field. The ASTC annual conference is one of the premier annual events for science-engagement professionals and leaders in science and technology centers and museums as well as allied organizations across North America and around the world. Demke presented a session at the conference entitled *Engaging Your Community on Difficult Topics: Lessons from Communities for Immunity*. Her presentation shared NDGTS's partnership with the North Dakota Department of Health to improve vaccine confidence through hands-on educational modules.

As the executive director of North Dakota's Gateway to Science, Demke has worked in the area of informal STEM education since 1994. Currently located in the Frances Leach High Prairie Arts & Science Complex, NDGTS is constructing a 43,000 square foot stand-alone science center that will open in early 2023. More information is available at www.gatewaytoscience.org.

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