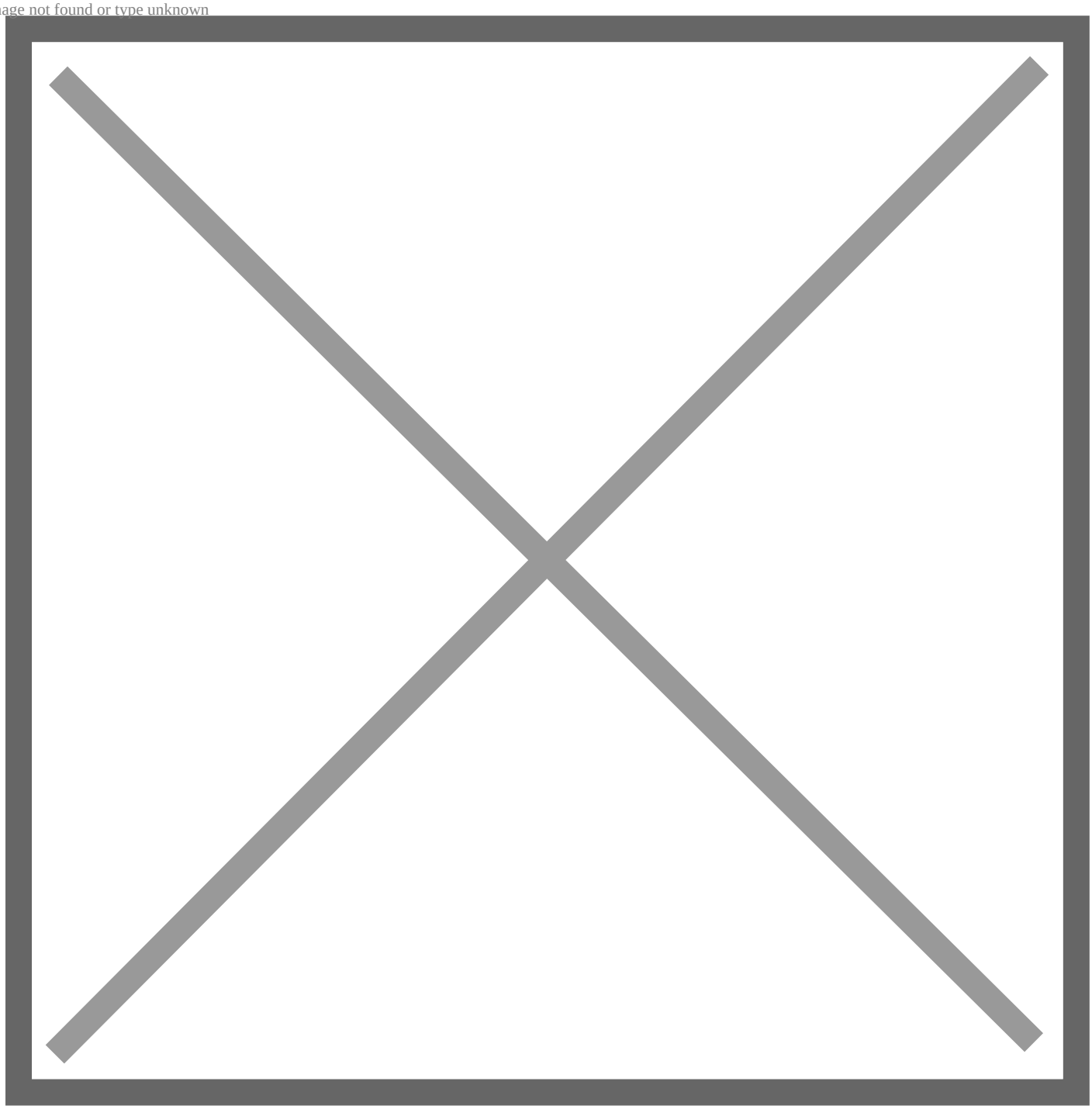
Hands-on STEM for Middle Schools

June 15, 2018

Image not found or type unknown



JACKSON, Tenn. (June 15, 2018) – A program designed to prepare students and put them on a pathway to thriving careers will soon debut at five Jackson-Madison County middle schools.

The program is part of a **national effort** by Toyota USA Foundation, together with Project Lead The Way (PLTW), to inspire and prepare students for next-generation jobs. Grants totaling $100,000 were awarded to create access to PLTW's hands-on learning experiences and tackling current challenges like designing tires for a moon rover, cleaning up an oil spill or exploring robotics.

"Middle school is a crucial transitional time for youth to gain confidence in science, technology engineering and math subjects," said Bob Lloyd, Toyota Bodine plant president, during the grant announcement at the Toyota Bodine plant in Jackson, Tennessee.

"Our aim is to join existing efforts to create a comprehensive STEM pathway that leads to quality jobs," Lloyd added.

Science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) are one of the fastest growing occupation clusters in the South, with projected employment of 2.6 million workers by 2020. However, many STEM jobs are being left unfilled, **according to a recent report** by the Tennessee Division of College Career & Technical Education.

"The PLTW program will build on our efforts to offer students additional options and opportunities for their futures," said Dr. Eric Jones, superintendent of the Jackson-Madison County school system. "Introducing new STEM-based learning in our middle schools will allow for even greater academic success as these students enter high school."

PLTW programs help empower teachers and students, providing skills, resources and teacher development. The **PLTW Gateway program** will be implemented in fall 2018 at North Parkway Middle School which will use the grant to purchase additional instructional materials and to fund an in-depth teacher training.

"Our students will be afforded advanced hands-on science, engineering design and mathematical authentic-based instruction," said Tiffany Taylor, North Parkway School principal. "PLTW will allow us to provide challenging instruction that requires our students to become critical thinkers and problem solvers."

Schools receiving grants include:

- North Parkway Middle School
- Northeast Middle School
- Jackson Careers and Technology Middle School
- West Bemis Middle School
- Rose Hill School