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SMART's New Sponsor a School Program Win-win for Businesses and Oregon Children

Portland, Ore. – Businesses have responded positively to SMART's (Start Making A Reader Today) new Sponsor a School program, which offers Oregon companies the opportunity to help at-risk children across the state become confident, successful readers.

Through the school sponsorship, a business adopts an entire SMART program at a site of their choosing, and provides financial resources to provide children at that site with one-on-one reading support and books to take home and keep, as well as employee volunteers to serve as Readers.

First Tech Federal Credit Union was the first business to sign on as SMART school sponsor, supporting Beaver Acres Elementary School in Beaverton.

"We're very proud and excited to be the first major sponsor of the SMART program at Beaver Acres Elementary," said First Tech president and CEO, Greg Mitchell. "We believe strongly in educating today's youth in order to build a stronger future. SMART is a great partner for us because our employees can also volunteer as reading mentors, allowing them to give back to their community and help children learn and succeed. Many of our employees already volunteer with SMART, so it was a natural fit to develop a longstanding partnership with SMART."

In addition to First Tech, Wieden+Kennedy and G5 have signed on as SMART school sponsors, supporting sites in Portland and Bend.

"In many ways, the Sponsor a School program is SMART returning to its roots," said Chris Otis, SMART Executive Director. "Our organization was started more than 20 years ago by a group of business leaders who had a vested interest in creating a strong, well-educated future work force – which begins with reading. The Sponsor a School program reengages businesses by giving them an active role in boosting the skills and self-confidence children need to read and succeed, and inspiring them to use reading as a tool for learning throughout their lives."

About First Tech Federal Credit Union

First Tech Federal Credit Union is a \$5.6 billion institution with headquarters in Mountain View, Calif. With administrative offices in Beaverton, Ore. and Rocklin, Calif., it is the nation's premier credit union serving the world's leading technology-oriented companies and their employees, including HP, Microsoft, Agilent, Intel, CISCO, Amazon, Nike, CH2M HILL, Intuit, Google and more. First Tech is recognized as the industry catalyst for delivering effortless banking experiences to its 360,000 members through its 39 branch locations, more than 4,000 Shared Branch locations, 30,000 CO-OP Network ATMs and 286,000 ATMs nationwide. First Tech offers a full range of banking services, including traditional banking, mortgage, financial planning and insurance services. For more information, visit firsttechfed.com.

About SMART® (Start Making A Reader Today)

SMART (Start Making A Reader Today) is a statewide nonprofit organization that envisions an Oregon where every child can read and is empowered to succeed. We partner with schools around the state and engage community volunteers to read one-on-one with PreK-3rd grade children, helping strengthen literacy skills and encourage a love of reading.

Over the past two decades, SMART has steadily grown to become Oregon's largest volunteer literacy program. In 2012-2013, we served more than 8,500 children statewide with the help of nearly 5,000 community volunteers. Children in the program receive 14 new books throughout the school year to keep and read with their families. Together, with support from communities and schools around the state, SMART is creating stronger, more confident readers. Visit www.getSMARToregon.org or call 877-598-4633 to learn more about SMART.

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