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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 5, 2009

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Engineers Inspire 23,000+ Oregon students during National Engineers Month

Business Education Compact spearheads 15th annual celebration

BEAVERTON, Ore. – Feb. 5, 2009 – With Oregon Governor Kulongoski's proclamation that February 2009 is National Engineers Month, approximately 400 engineers will visit 825 classrooms across Oregon and Southwest Washington this month.

This marks the 15th straight year that the nonprofit Business Education Compact (BEC) has coordinated the statewide event.

"Our hope is that we can inspire the next generation of engineers by getting students excited about science, technology, engineering and math," explains Maureen Shaw, BEC board chair and Portland General Electric supervisor of workforce planning and diversity. "Engineers across Oregon are proud to support the schools, thanks to the Business Education Compact."

The shortage of U.S. engineers is expected to reach 70,000 by 2010, based on an estimate by the National Science Foundation. And, an overwhelming 85% of kids aged 8-17 say that they are not interested in a future engineering career, according to a December 2008 online survey conducted by Harris Interactive on behalf of the American Society for Quality.

"The goal of National Engineer's Month is to make math and science 'real' to students by showing them, first-hand, the exciting and creative things that engineers do," said Tamra Busch-Johnsen, BEC's executive director. "We're grateful for the many companies and engineers that have stepped up and given of their time, talents and resources."

Since 1995, BEC has coordinated professional engineer visits with more than 250,000 students. These volunteer engineers spend thousands of hours stirring the imaginations of students and exposing them to technical career possibilities, ranging from chip design and aeronautics to biotechnology and forestry.

For example, this year, more than 70 IBM volunteer engineers will teach kids the principles of energy and motion with an "Amazing Rockets" activity. Through similar presentations and hands-on activities, students learn how studying math and science can open doors to a world of careers.

NEM 2009 partners include: AMEC Earth & Environmental, Inc.; Bioanalytical Systems, Inc.; CH2M Hill; Daimler Trucks North America; Equa-Chlor LLC; ESCO Corporation; FLIR Systems, Inc.; IBM; Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) - Oregon Section; Intel Corporation; Lattice Semiconductor Corporation; Micro Systems Engineering Inc.; Oregon Museum of Science and Industry; Oregon Department of Transportation; Oregon Forest Resources Institute; PacifiCorp; PCC Structurals; Portland General Electric; Precision Wire Components; RadiSys Corporation; Schnitzer Steel Industries; TriQuint Semiconductor; Welch Allyn; and Vernier Software & Technology.

For more information about National Engineers Month or to participate in this and other upcoming Business Education Compact events, visit www.becpdx.org.

ABOUT THE BUSINESS EDUCATION COMPACT

A nonprofit organization with a statewide presence, the Business Education Compact has been investing in quality education in Oregon for the past 25 years by: better preparing educators for the classroom of the 21st century; connecting the classroom and workplace through innovative, hands-on experiences such as student and teacher internships; and by helping students realize how studying science, math and technology can translate into exciting career opportunities. IEEE-Oregon Chapter named the BEC as its “2008 Most Valued Partner” because of its work on National Engineers Month. Learn more about the BEC by visiting www.becpdx.org.