2015 Colorado STEM Summit a Huge Success

Friday, October 30th made Chamber history

The Chamber’s first annual Colorado STEM Summit was monumental, where 600+ people gathered at the Marriott Denver Tech Center for a full day of science, technology, engineering, and math.

The Chamber’s very own Doug Tisdale, EVP, graciously emceed the event - he entertained the crowd with science jokes.

Lt. Governor Joe Garcia kicked off the day with a few words, followed by morning keynote Norman Augustine. Two panels followed; one focused on business and the other on education.

Thomas Friedman quieted the loud ballroom when he addressed the stage. His keynote was compelling and timely, zeroing in on a big issue: with the rate of technology progressing at such a fast pace, what does that mean for society? He described this as “life on the second half of the chessboard,” a story and legend dating back to the invention of the game of chess. It describes the power of exponential growth, which in technological terms, matches Moore’s Law.

“It’s a great time to be a maker, because you can get skills now, anywhere,” Friedman said. “It’s also an amazing time to be a maker, because guessing is officially over. Finding a needle in a haystack will become the norm.” These comments were in regards to big data. He went on to explain that when there are makers, there are breakers. With technology comes choice, and that means people have endless opportunities to make bad decisions with technology.

“(There is a) new divide in the World… order between disorder. Not North, South, East, West. The idea of the high wage, middle-skilled job…. Which was what made up the middle class for the first 50 years after World War II. This is over… it is only high-wage, high skill now.” Friedman had several remarks on what is changing for the job landscape in the United States. He referred to jobs that combine STEM and empathy as ‘stempathy’ and claimed those will be the most sought-after jobs, stating “the only jobs that have shown vast improvement since 2000 are ones that require cognitive and social skills.”

Friedman wrapped up the afternoon, and breakout sessions followed. The conference concluded with happy hour. The South Metro Denver Chamber would like to give a tremendous thanks to all of its sponsors, including: CSU- Global, Boy Scouts of America, AlloSource, Colorado Business Bank, Merrick & Company, ICOSA, Denver Water, Share Fair Nation, and Mile High United Way.

A very warm thank you to Stephanie Short, Kim DeCoste, Sue Kenfield, Mark Alpert, and Brian Bartony.