



## NEWS RELEASE

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# Southland Casino Racing Supports Coding Professional Development

*Southland Casino Racing donates \$5,220 to Delta STEM Education Center at Arkansas State University*

**WEST MEMPHIS, Ark.** (June 10, 2019) – On Thursday, May 30, Southland Casino Racing presented the Delta STEM Education Center at Arkansas State University with a check for \$5,220 to support a coding professional development for ten teachers on June 6, 2019. The professional development is designed for ten teachers grades 5-9 from Marion, West Memphis, and Earle Schools Districts. This donation includes everything ten teachers would need to immediately implement the materials and curriculum into the classroom without purchasing extra material.

“A-State Delta STEM is very grateful for the gift received from Southland Casino Racing. This gift will allow Delta STEM to purchase materials for schools. These materials will help schools implement computer science into the everyday classroom.” said Allen Hays, Director A-State Delta STEM Center.

Digital technologies are used everywhere. Items such as smartphones, automobiles, elevators, and computers are things that most people know were programmed by someone with computer coding skills. However, many people are unaware that items such as refrigerators, washing machines and even your hot water tank, utilize microprocessing systems that require programming code. All of these systems have to be engineered, built and repaired.

Coding, engineering, construction and repair are all important fields within STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math). STEM has not been a major focus in education until the last few years. There has been a recent awakening in education due to the lack of skilled people to enter the fields that require STEM knowledge. Therefore, there has been a major push to introduce students to coding and STEM sooner rather than later. Many schools are currently introducing students to STEM and coding as early as kindergarten so they can start developing their interests in STEM related areas such as computer sciences, robotics, and engineering. The Arkansas Department of Education has taken a stance to address this demand and has started implementing standards that reflect STEM in the classrooms. Through this transition of curriculum, the Delta area has struggled in finding funding and teacher training that would allow their students to be competitive in the workforce. Southland Casino is helping to close this gap by supporting the Delta STEM Education Center in supplying the training and materials needed to Crittenden County schools.

“We look forward to partnering with Southland to help public school students with computer science.” noted Dr. Mary Jane Bradley, Dean College of Education and Behavioral Science.

And, Dr. Lance Bryant, Associate Dean College of Education and Behavioral Science, said, “The A-State College of Education and Behavioral Science and the Delta STEM is appreciative of this recent gift from

Southland Casino that will provide and enhance further science opportunities for students that may not have otherwise been available.”

### About Southland Casino Racing

Southland Casino Racing has been a major racing venue for more than 60 years and now has over 2,000 slots plus live table games -- as well as the World Market Buffet, Bourbon St. Steakhouse and the Starting Gate Event Center. Southland has long been a pivotal fixture of the West Memphis community, strongly supporting the community with jobs, business stability, and economic contributions. It has consistently won awards for its outstanding community service, including millions of dollars donated to neighborhood charities and educational institutions. Southland is owned and operated by Delaware North, a global leader in hospitality. More information is available at [www.southlandcasino.com](http://www.southlandcasino.com).

### About Delaware North

Delaware North is one of the largest privately held hospitality companies in the world. Founded in 1915 and owned by the Jacobs family for more than 100 years, Delaware North has global operations at high-profile places such as sports and entertainment venues, national and state parks, destination resorts and restaurants, airports, and regional casinos. Our 55,000 employee associates are dedicated to creating special experiences one guest at a time in serving more than a half-billion guests annually. Delaware North operates in the sports, travel hospitality, restaurant and catering, parks, resorts, gaming, and specialty retail industries and has annual revenue of more than \$3 billion. Learn more about Delaware North, a global leader in hospitality and food service, at [www.DelawareNorth.com](http://www.DelawareNorth.com).

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Photo left to right: Dr. Lance Bryant, A-State Associate Dean College of Education and Behavioral Science / Jessica Blackburn, A-State Director of Foundation and Corporate Engagement / Neki Catron, Southland Casino Racing Community Outreach Manager / Conley Ferguson, Southland Casino Racing Director of Player Services / Dr. Mary Jane Bradley, A-State Dean College of Education and Behavioral Science / Alan Hayes, Director A-State Delta STEM Center

