

Adel School Celebrates Opening of New SmartLab, Expanding STEM Opportunities for Rural Oregon Students

Hands-on learning environment strengthens project-based learning, technology integration, and community engagement

ADEL, OR, UNITED STATES, November 18, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Adel School, part of the Lake County School District in southeastern Oregon, celebrated the grand opening of its new SmartLab, marking a major investment in hands-on, project-based learning for students from preschool through middle school. The ribbon-cutting event brought together families, educators, local partners, and regional leaders who gathered to explore the new space and engage directly with students as they demonstrated robotics, engineering tools, digital media, circuitry, and other interdisciplinary STEM projects now embedded into daily instruction.



Students join SmartLab staff in officially cutting the ribbon to open Adel School's new SmartLab, marking a milestone for hands-on STEM learning in the rural Warner Valley community.

Located in one of Oregon's most remote frontier communities, Adel School has taken a transformative step toward providing equitable access to 21st-century learning experiences. The SmartLab—built to support personalized learning, STEM identity development, and future-ready skill building—offers an environment where students lead their own learning through inquiry, collaboration, and applied problem-solving.

During the event, guests toured student-led stations that showcased everything from programmable robots and structural design with motorized pulley systems to a pneumatic system designed to crush cans and animated digital storytelling. The demonstration highlighted how even the youngest learners are building technical confidence, communication skills, and real-world application of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

“Our students work hard inside and outside of our SmartLab. Really, the students think they are playing with pretty neat toys, and to the untrained eye, that is exactly what people think,” said Stacey Martin, Head Teacher at Adel School. “In reality, SmartLab has offered us an opportunity to teach a wide variety of lessons using the Learning Hub, along with using the kits disguised as ‘toys.’ The engagement, intentional reading and writing has been vital to the high level of education that we strive for at Adel School.”



Adel School students test their Ozobot coding paths, demonstrating how the SmartLab integrates robotics and problem-solving into daily learning.

Teachers are already implementing the SmartLab tools to expand cross-curricular learning and deepen student ownership of projects. “SmartLab offers teachers more opportunity to integrate science, technology, engineering, and math into our units of study throughout the day,” said Adel School teacher Robin Shine. “This space helps us blend creativity, exploration, and rigor in ways that make learning meaningful and fun.”

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*Stacey Martin, Head Teacher
at Adel School*

Families expressed excitement for the opportunities now available in Adel’s rural setting. “As a parent, I’m thrilled about the new SmartLab at Adel School,” said Andrea Otley, Adel parent and former student. “It’s not just a classroom; it’s an exciting space where kids, like my daughter, can unleash their creativity and collaborate with their peers to solve real problems. The hands-on approach to learning brings science to life in a way that traditional lessons can’t. It’s a unique opportunity that challenges our

children and helps them develop critical thinking skills. I believe the new SmartLab will not only benefit Rebecca but our entire community, giving our kids an edge in their education and preparing them for the future.”

Educational leaders from across the region celebrated Adel School’s investment in high-quality STEM learning. “The Adel School has worked above and beyond the call of duty to open the doors to more than a STEM lab — they opened doors to curiosity, creativity, and collaboration,” said Amy Fortune of the Lake County Education Service District. “Adel teachers and staff have prepared to guide students in exploring real-world challenges, and the students’ voices and ideas will shape discoveries that reach far beyond these walls. SmartLab isn’t just for Adel School

— it's a place where the entire community can grow, learn, and imagine a brighter future together."

Visitors from the Eastern Oregon Regional Educator Network also shared their impressions. "I was so impressed by the level of student engagement and ownership in the new Adel SmartLab," said Jennifer J. Martin, Eastern Oregon REN Director, Malheur County ESD. "Students—from preschool through middle school—were confident, respectful, and truly experts as they guided adults through their respective stations. The new STEM Center is a beautiful, thoughtfully designed space that offers remarkable hands-on opportunities to explore science, math, and engineering principles. What stood out most wasn't just the cutting-edge technology, but the masterful way Mrs. Martin facilitates student-led learning, bringing high-tech tools to life in a rural, frontier school setting. The Eastern Oregon REN is thrilled to have such a unique and inspiring resource for teachers and students within our rural region."



Students and families explore hands-on design activities in Adel School's new SmartLab during the ribbon-cutting celebration, experimenting with 3D tools and creative STEM materials.

Support from the Central Oregon STEM Hub further emphasized the value of Adel School's dedication to inquiry-based learning. "SmartLab and Adel School District deserve genuine praise for outstanding commitment to hands-on STEM engagement," said Tracy Willson-Scott, Coordinator for the Central Oregon STEM Hub, High Desert ESD. "In a world where textbook and computer-based learning can often feel dry, SmartLab effectively bridges the gap between theory and practice, transforming abstract concepts into tangible, exciting projects. By giving students the tools to actually build, experiment, and problem-solve, they are not just passively consuming information; they are actively becoming scientists and engineers. This approach doesn't just teach what to know—it teaches how to think. Bravo for making STEM an adventure, not just another class."

The ribbon-cutting celebration also featured a community barbecue with homemade burger patties generously donated by Butcher Block Meats, a local business known for supporting school and community initiatives. Organizers shared their appreciation for the contribution, noting that the donation helped create a warm and welcoming community event.

Adel School leaders emphasized that the new SmartLab represents a commitment to rural innovation and future readiness. By embedding STEM and STEAM instruction across grade levels, the school is preparing students for success in high school pathways, postsecondary

opportunities, and careers increasingly relevant across rural Oregon.

Adel School District

In alignment with Warner Valley's ways, the Adel School District is committed to fostering a positive educational environment that recognizes and nurtures each student's unique strengths, gifts, and talents. Its holistic approach aims to create an optimal learning experience tailored to the individual needs of every student. [To learn more, visit lakeesd.k12.or.us/AdelSchool.](https://lakeesd.k12.or.us/AdelSchool)

Lake County School District

Lake County School District serves students across one of Oregon's most rural regions, providing high-quality education grounded in community values, innovation, and equitable access. The district is committed to preparing all students for lifelong success through engaging learning experiences, strong community partnerships, and a safe, supportive environment. [To learn more, visit lakeesd.k12.or.us.](https://lakeesd.k12.or.us)

SmartLab

SmartLab delivers turnkey, career-centered K-12 STEM programs that equip today's students for tomorrow's challenges. Every hands-on PBL solution integrates grade-appropriate STEM applications across eight industry pathways. SmartLab programs include dedicated classroom setups or flexible systems designed for mobility, along with standards-aligned curriculum, teacher training, and ongoing technical and curricular support.

For more information about SmartLab solutions or to learn how project-based learning environments support student engagement and STEM readiness in rural communities, [visit www.smartlablearning.com](https://www.smartlablearning.com) or contact the SmartLab team for school tours, case studies, or partnership inquiries.

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