

News Release

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Think BIG program grows Phoenix Contact awards \$565,000 to Capital Area Intermediate Unit to expand 4th grade STEM curriculum

Middletown, Pa. – Many fourth-grade students in Central Pennsylvania will have the chance to participate in a hands-on science curriculum based on Phoenix Contact's Think BIG program. As part of the company's 100th anniversary celebration, Phoenix Contact leaders from Germany and the U.S. donated \$565,000 to the Capital Area Intermediate Unit (CAIU). CAIU will use the funds to formalize and expand the curriculum for schools within its territory.

Phoenix Contact developed the Think BIG program in 2017 in partnership with Foose Elementary School in Harrisburg. Each month, from November through May, employees volunteer in the classroom to teach hands-on science lessons. The curriculum uses engineering methods to solve problems in the context of clean energy.

During the remaining 2023-24 school year, the CAIU team will shadow Phoenix Contact employees on their monthly visits to Foose Elementary School so they can formalize the curriculum. CAIU supports 60 elementary schools in Dauphin, Cumberland, Perry, and Northern York counties. The goal is to launch Think BIG to an additional 15 to 20 elementary schools during the 2024-25 school year. To learn more about supporting this important initiative, please visit www.caiu.org/community/opportunities-for-everyone/thinkbig or contact ThinkBig@caiu.org.

"Phoenix Contact is celebrating its 100th anniversary, and our company's success is driven by the creativity of our engineers. We believe science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education is the key to building the next generation of engineers, and we're proud to support STEM programs for students from elementary school through the college level," said Jack Nehlig, president of Phoenix Contact USA. "Since we kicked off the Think BIG program in 2017, our goal has been to make this fun and educational program available to more students. CAIU is the ideal partner to help us inspire more future engineers across Central Pennsylvania."



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“CAIU is honored and excited to partner with Phoenix Contact for the expansion of the Think BIG program. Our core values are to be great and change lives for students in the capital region, and we believe the expansion of a hands-on, real-world STEM program for elementary students will do both of those things,” said Dr. Andria Saia, executive director of CAIU. “Studies have shown that students in early childhood are forming career beliefs and aspirations, and developing a growth mindset and having the opportunity to engage in in-depth career exploration are critical to their future success. Now more than ever, America needs well-educated students in the STEM disciplines, and starting work with elementary-aged students is a great way to meet that need.”

About Phoenix Contact

In 2023, Phoenix Contact is celebrating 100 years of passion for technology and innovation. Since 1923, Phoenix Contact has worked with customers and partners to develop innovative products and solutions in the fields of energy, infrastructure, process, and factory automation. The German-based company has a worldwide network reaching across more than 100 countries with over 22,000 employees. As a family-owned business, Phoenix Contact acts responsibly today to build a better world for future generations. Phoenix Contact USA has been recognized as a “Best Place to Work in Pennsylvania,” a WELCOA Well Workplace Gold Winner, and a four-time recipient of the Governor’s Award for Environmental Excellence.

For more information about Phoenix Contact or its products, visit www.phoenixcontact.com, call technical service at 800-322-3225, or email info@phoenixcontact.com.

About CAIU

Located in Enola, the Capital Area Intermediate Unit (CAIU) has classrooms and program locations throughout Cumberland, Dauphin, Perry and northern York counties in South-Central Pennsylvania. The CAIU provides innovative support and services in partnership with schools, families, and communities to build capacity and model courageous leadership to help them be great. Visit www.caiu.org for more information.

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