NASA AREN team hosts miniature kite-building at Montana State University's Family Science Night

March 1, 2018

Bozeman, Mont. - Members of Montana State University's NASA AREN team (Aerokats and Rovers Education Network) shared a hands-on engineering activity with 535 people at the university's annual Family Science Night on March 1.

The AREN team assisted kids and adults in building miniature kites based on designs by Glenn Davison with refinement from the NASA AREN team. AREN is a program supported by NASA Science Mission Directorate Science Education that designs and uses low-cost instrumented systems for in-situ and remotely sensed Earth observations including kite-based "AEROKATS" and remotely controlled aquatic and land-based "ROVERS."

In the morning session of MSU Family Science Day, 150 fifth graders from Bozeman Title 1 schools (high percentage of free and reduced lunch) visited the event as a field trip, exploring a wide range of university activities and demonstrations featuring AREN as well as nanotechnology, micro-fluidics, soil science and more. The evening session hosted 385 members of the community, and included additional activities like reverse engineering and an algae bio-fertilization demonstration. Other NASA-supported groups participating in the event included the eXtreme Gravity Institute, Space Public Outreach Team (Montana Space Grant Consortium) and the Northwest Earth and Space Science Pipeline (NESSP).

At the AREN station, youth and adults used tissue paper, mylar, silk thread and 20-inch straws to build one of two different miniature kite styles. AREN team members assisted with the construction process while sharing an overview of the NASA AREN project and words of encouragement for our country's future scientists and engineers. The miniature kites featured blue and gold materials to celebrate Montana State University's 125th birthday.

A local news report on MSU Family Science Day prominently featured the AREN team and miniature kite station.

-30-