

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
April 5, 2021

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**  
Jennifer Schultz, Communications Director  
[Jennifer.Schultz@illinois.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Schultz@illinois.gov)

## **Governor Pritzker Proclaims April as Innovation and Technology Month in Illinois**

Springfield, IL - Governor JB Pritzker is proclaiming the month of April as [Innovation and Technology Month in Illinois](#). The annual event provides an opportunity to recognize the importance of the technology industry to Illinois and the value it brings for businesses and residents of the state.

“Illinois excels in the pillars of the innovation economy: We have some of the best research universities in the world, producing the third largest number of computer science graduates, the fourth largest number of MBAs in the nation, and the sixth highest number of data scientists. Our startup hubs have cemented the city of Chicago and the state of Illinois as global players in innovation and technology,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “My administration is committed to making Illinois a leader among the most forward-thinking and innovative states in the nation and continues to support programs and policies that will prepare Illinois workers for the jobs of tomorrow.”

According to the 2020 Illinois Innovation Index from the Illinois Science & Technology Coalition (ISTC), Illinois higher education institutions awarded 24,861 bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees in STEM areas, a new record for the state and ranking Illinois 7th in STEM degrees, nationally.

To prepare students for higher education, Illinois is committed to the expansion of free broadband for K-12 public schools throughout the state via the Illinois Century Network for more equitable and fair educational opportunities. During remote learning as a result of the pandemic, [wireless hotspots sites](#) were also expanded throughout the state.

“The importance of digital connections and solutions has been critical during the COVID pandemic,” **commented Jennifer Ricker, Illinois CIO and Acting Secretary for the Department of Innovation & Technology (DoIT)**. “Our team at DoIT has worked closely with state agencies to modernize websites to support unprecedented web traffic, utilize artificial intelligence to launch virtual agents for increased call center demands, apply data analytics to drive critical decision making and empower secure remote work capabilities for state employees.”

In recognition of Innovation and Technology Month in Illinois, Illinois DoIT is conducting events including outreach to educators on broadband expansion, meeting to discuss strengthening school curriculums on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) and a public/private sector collaboration to discuss advancing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in the technology industry.

###