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Professional Society Resources and Partnerships for Public and K-12 Outreach and Engagement

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Outreach and public engagement lower the barriers that inhibit broader public appreciation of and participation in physics, and are important for inspiring the next generation of scientists and science-literate citizens. The APS and many other professional societies have made significant and sustained investments in public engagement because of the importance of these activities - APS, for example, has an entire department dedicated to outreach. In addition, professional societies have responded to members who desire resources for enabling and enhancing their own outreach efforts. A key question is always, “What works?” Professional societies can help provide the answers. In this talk, I will explore the critical interface played by professional societies as a bridge to the public, as a resource to members, and as a broker of partnerships. I will also feature numerous examples of creative and compelling ways to engage the public, including physicscentral.org, LaserFest, NISE Net, Comic Con, SOCKs, citizen science, and many more. A more important question is, “Is it fun?” I will show that the answer is an unqualified, “Yes!”

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