Students worldwide participated in Hour of Code held this month. Wheatmore High School teacher Jason Metters is promoting digital literacy and providing a foundation for 21st century careers through the use of an App Lab which students use to design their own computer applications.

Hour of Code at Wheatmore

BY DEBBIE HIGHTOWER

TRINITY — Wheatmore High School students joined 100 million students worldwide to participate in Hour of Code during Computer Education Week held earlier this month. In the web design and multimedia classroom of Jason Metters however, every hour is Hour of Code.

In an effort to demystify computer code and show that anybody can learn the basics, Hour of Code began four years ago in an attempt to broaden participation in the field of computer science. In the past four years, Hour of Code has become a worldwide effort to celebrate computer science, starting with 1-hour coding activities, but expanding to all sorts of community efforts.

Challenges in Hour of Code (https://hourofcode.com/) include a choice of activities suitable for pre-readers and up that introduce basic computer coding. During the week, Metters’ Word and PowerPoint classes used the App Lab in Code.org to familiarize themselves to coding with Javascript.

Long familiar with basic coding concepts, Metters’ afternoon class pushed

In North Carolina, there are currently more than 16,000 vacant computing jobs. However, in 2015, just under 1,300 postsecondary students graduated with computer science degrees in North Carolina. In addition, fewer than 6,000 K-12 students are enrolled in a computer science course.

In his Computer Education Week proclamation, Governor Roy Cooper said, “Providing more opportunities for students to study computer science and computer programming, whether informally through extracurricular activities and clubs or through computer science courses in middle and high school, will help to encourage students to pursue computing careers and will better prepare them for our evolving workforce. Computer science education provides foundational learning in computational thinking that enables students to develop and apply critical thinking skills, demonstrate imagination and creativity, practice collaboration, exhibit leadership, and employ problem-solving skills.”

American computer programmer and Internet entrepreneur Mark Zuckerberg said, “In 15 years we'll be teaching programming just like reading and writing ... and wondering why we didn't do it sooner.”

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The travel site app created by Bryce McDevitt helps potential travelers make decisions based on options available in each location. Wheatmore High School students in the web design and multimedia class are learning skills that will become commonplace in 21st century careers.

Left: Using an online tool, Justin Mills designed an app for his favorite chicken restaurant. Using 60 lines of code, he created the app that gives users options such as sauces and calorie counts for each menu item.