



News Release

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GRAND OPENING OF THE WESTERN INSTITUTE

St. Joseph, Mo. —Nov. 12, 2004—Serving as a valuable resource to northwest Missouri is the purpose of the Western Institute at Missouri Western State College, according to its executive director and dean Dr. Christopher Shove. The Institute, which was formed in July, held a grand opening Nov. 11 in its offices in the Leah Spratt Multipurpose Classroom Building.

“The Institute is an applied research resource center, serving the community, the region and beyond,” said Dr. Shove. He said the Institute currently has the capability of conducting research for clients in the areas of economic development, business analysis, urban and natural resource Geographic Information Systems, life sciences, and human health and wellness.

Dr. Shove was hired as the founding dean and has directed similar university outreach programs in Ohio, Oklahoma and Florida. Those centers received local, state and national commendations for their activities directed by Dr. Shove, and Dr. Shove was recognized as the Outstanding Economic Development Professional in the United States while working for the Florida Department of Commerce under then Commerce Secretary Jeb Bush.

The Institute is currently working on a project with the city of St. Joseph and the St. Joseph Area Chamber of Commerce. The three entities have filed a joint application to the United States Economic Development Administration to fund a feasibility study for an innovation incubator and venture capital for St. Joseph. Another Institute project involves mapping 2 million farms in the United States. That information will be used by the Department of Agriculture to monitor the amount of farmland used for crop purposes.

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Dr. Shove noted that the Institute, which encompasses the continuing education and special programs offices, will continue to offer programs such as the certified law enforcement officer academy, Global Positioning System workshops, customized training for business and government, high school college credit courses and graduate courses, as well as noncredit courses covering a variety of interests including international travel study. In 2003-2004 over 23,000 students were enrolled in credit and non-credit classes through the Western Institute. The Institute also coordinates local, state and national conferences.

Dr. James Scanlon, Western's president, and U.S. Rep. Sam Graves of the sixth Congressional District, spoke at the grand opening ceremonies.

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Missouri Western State College is a four-year public institution providing a blend of traditional liberal arts and professional degree programs. The college offers student-centered, high quality instruction that focuses on experience-based learning, community service, and state-of-the-art technology. Western is located in St. Joseph, Mo. and is committed to the educational, economic, cultural and social development of the region it serves.