

Maryville Daily Forum column
Thursday, June 2, 2011
Dr. John Jasinski, Northwest Missouri State University President

Our focus on student success at Northwest Missouri State – every student, every day – was evident once again this past weekend as we celebrated the accomplishments of the 10th class to graduate from our Missouri Academy of Science, Mathematics and Computing.

With Dr. David Russell, commissioner of higher education for the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education, delivering Saturday's commencement address, 74 students received their associate of science degrees along with their high school diplomas.

As you may know, the Missouri Academy, which opened on the Northwest campus in August 2000, replaces the junior and senior years of traditional high school. Students enroll in a curriculum consisting of all college coursework taught by Northwest faculty. The Academy provides an opportunity for high-performing and exceptional students to live, socialize and study in an active learning community of peers.

And like so many of our Missouri Academy alumni, the 2011 class, known as the Pioneers, has accumulated some noteworthy accomplishments. Fifty-five percent of the graduates earned a cumulative grade-point average greater than 3.5, and 100 percent of these students will attend a four-year college or university to complete their baccalaureate degrees.

I'm delighted that seven of these graduates will continue their educational pursuits at Northwest. In fact, 39 of the graduates will remain in the Show-Me State, and others will venture to institutions such as Boston University, BYU, Georgetown, Johns Hopkins, Purdue, Rutgers and the U.S. Naval Academy. They will study fields including biochemistry, pre-med, aerospace, nanoscale science and physics.

Concern for Joplin

Along with the Maryville community and the region, the collective thoughts of our Northwest community have been with the residents of Joplin since their city was devastated by the May 22 tornado.

In the days afterward, we reached out to our counterparts at Missouri Southern State University and Crowder College in Neosho. We're also communicating with officials at the Missouri Department of Higher Education about a longer-term response in support of our colleagues at Missouri Southern.

This run of severe weather once again is a reminder that we must remain on top of our emergency procedures. Northwest's emergency personnel meet regularly to address specific scenarios in addition to improving our emergency alert systems. We also continue to work closely with Maryville and Nodaway County public safety departments to address safety concerns and ensure our systems are working in sync with each other.

In the meantime, the Joplin community has a long road of recovery ahead. At the recommendations of emergency officials, we are encouraging people who want to assist with the relief efforts to make monetary donations through SEMA Missouri Disaster Relief (www.sema.dps.mo.gov/recover/donations.asp) or through the Red Cross (www.redcross.org).

As Bearcats, we pride ourselves on being engaged in the Maryville community, our region, our state, our country and our world. Bearcat Nation has always been quick to help others in need, and once again we are compelled to help in ways that we can.

Summer notes

Although the summer months are here, there's no shortage of activity taking place at Northwest.

Our Summer Movie Series – which is free and open to the public – is sponsored by the Office of Campus Activities and continues each Tuesday night with movies showing at 7 p.m. in the Ron Houston Center for the Performing Arts and at 9 p.m. at the College Park Pavilion, weather permitting.

Northwest is hosting guided tours of our Jean Jennings Bartik Computing Museum at 3:30 p.m. Sunday, in the B.D. Owens Library. The tours follow a memorial service hosted by the family of Jean Bartik, a computing pioneer and Northwest alumna who grew up in Stanberry.

Northwest Night at the Mustangs is Saturday, June 11. Discounted tickets are available at the Alumni House for the game, which begins at 7 p.m. at Phil Welch Stadium in St. Joseph. Bobby Bearcat, the Northwest cheerleaders and the Bearcat Steppers will perform. There will be plenty of giveaways throughout the game, and I pledge to represent Bearcats with a solid first pitch.

Also, in coming weeks, Northwest is hosting several summer camps to help our area youth further develop their skills in all types of sports, in addition to music camps. These camps provide excellent opportunities for community interaction and we encourage you to view the complete listing of our camps, including dates and contact information, by going to www.nwmissouri.edu/camps/.

Dr. John Jasinski is the 10th president of Northwest Missouri State University. For news and events at Northwest visit www.nwmissouri.edu.