

**Maryville Daily Forum column**  
**Thursday, Dec. 1, 2011**  
**Dr. John Jasinski, Northwest Missouri State University President**

As I look around this week, the holiday spirit is indeed alive and well in northwest Missouri. The Maryville community is taking on a festive feel with more holiday lights appearing on homes, and businesses are bustling. Earlier this week, we flipped the switch on our holiday tree in front of the Gaunt House on the Northwest Missouri State campus, and we presented more than 130 donated blankets and clothing items to the Ministry Center.

During this season of celebration and giving thanks, I'm thankful each and every day for our Bearcat culture, the support of the Maryville community and the ways your contributions help to ensure our students are successful.

At Northwest Missouri State, we also take great pride in our reputation of being innovative. We were one of the first institutions in 1908 to provide rented textbooks to our students. We began heating and cooling the campus with alternative fuels in 1982. We made history as the electronic campus in 1987. The list goes on and on.

Northwest also has a long-standing tradition of waste reduction and recycling, implementing our paper collection program in 1993. This fall, I'm proud to say – thanks to the work of Sustainability Coordinator John Viau, Hardscape Supervisor Chris Redden, Landscape Services Associate Director Lezlee Johnson and so many others – our recycling and sustainability efforts are gaining momentum and adding a new dimension to our history of innovation.

John accepted the charge in January to head our sustainability office and hit the ground running. The office is now facilitating sustainability programs initiated by Northwest students and employees; working to identify materials and resources needed to supplement, expand or replace our existing sustainability programs; and integrating sustainability principles throughout the University.

Last spring, with the input and guidance of our agriculture department, Northwest launched an organized composting program. As they do so often, members of the hardscape team again put on their "innovator hats" and built a windrow compost turner with salvaged parts at a cost of about \$1,000 – as opposed to \$15,000 for a new unit! The composting program also has received strong support from Campus Dining, which installed new waste containers in the Bearcat Food Court to encourage composting. After finishing a meal, students and employees empty leftover food into a composting bin and separate their recyclables into bins for glass, plastic and aluminum.

Since the fall trimester began, we've collected more than 48,000 pounds of compost material that can be mixed with our landscaping materials and dispatched to the University farm, among other uses. Best of all, it's adding to our cost savings!

These kinds of efforts are being recognized, too. The Sierra Club recently ranked Northwest at No. 74 on its 2011 list of "cool schools," which surveys four-year institutions about their environmental goals and achievements. (The University of Washington tops the list, while

the University of Missouri-Columbia, at No. 75, is the only other Missouri school on the list.) Additionally, Tuesday in Jefferson City, Gov. Jay Nixon presented Northwest with the 2011 Annual Recycling Award for the community recycling project we helped establish with the city of Maryville. And last month, we unveiled an additional recycling drop-off site, off Ninth Street just east of the Valk Center, that provides another convenient location for you to leave your paper, glass and aluminum.

Furthermore, our students are stepping up. One of Northwest's newest student organizations is Students Taking Action at Northwest for Developing Sustainability (S.T.A.N.D.S.). Their name says it all, and the group recently capped its first "Greeks Go Green" recycling competition, which diverted more than 8,100 pounds of recyclable material from the local landfill during the four-week contest.

Looking ahead, we have a number of great events coming up at Northwest this month. Friday and Saturday, the Department of Music hosts its 38th annual Yuletide Feaste, a Renaissance-themed holiday celebration featuring a bounty of musicians, singers, actors, lords, ladies and royal personages in full regalia. The Jazz Ensemble and Wind Symphony perform a holiday concert Dec. 6, and our art department sponsors its annual art and pottery sale Dec. 9-10. The following week includes final exams and culminates with our winter commencement ceremony on Dec. 16.

Also, our athletics teams continue to play well and need your support. The football team travels to Pittsburg State Saturday for its quarterfinal playoff matchup. The men's and women's basketball teams play against Washburn Saturday evening at Bearcat Arena and then take on Pittsburg State Wednesday at home. It is no doubt an exciting time for Bearcat Nation!

On behalf of Northwest Missouri State University, I wish you a joyous holiday season!

*Dr. John Jasinski is the 10th president of Northwest Missouri State University. For news and events at Northwest, visit [www.nwmissouri.edu](http://www.nwmissouri.edu). For a complete listing of events at Northwest, visit [calendar.nwmissouri.edu](http://calendar.nwmissouri.edu).*