

**Maryville Daily Forum  
Thursday, Nov. 6, 2014**

**Dr. John Jasinski, Northwest Missouri State University President**

Northwest Missouri State last month celebrated the 90th anniversary of its first Homecoming in 1924. Homecoming traditions have come and gone over the years – the first Homecoming Queen was not crowned until 1941 – but the week was again an exciting time for our students, employees, alumni and community. From the hanging of the banners at the J.W. Jones Student Union and the canned art contributions to our Ministry Center to the Homecoming parade and game day festivities, the activities throughout the week serve to unite our campus and communities and reflect our Bearcat spirit.

Indeed, Northwest's Homecoming week is symbolic of our progress as a university and our gratitude for those who have committed themselves to moving it forward for more than 109 years.

Now November is here and with Thanksgiving fast approaching this, too, is a time to reflect on the strides we are making and the high-quality experience in which all of us collaborate to provide at Northwest.

I am thankful every day for the work our employees and you, as residents of our surrounding communities, do to drive student engagement and connections to help us meet our strategic goals. Thank you for the impact you make on students, our communities and each other. Northwest, the city of Maryville and Nodaway County complement each other well to produce strong performance. We are progressing on a variety of fronts and Northwest has significant plans being executed in relation to our strategic plan and our comprehensive campaign.

"Focus: Northwest's Strategic Plan" is being refined and we are beginning to execute on key actions related to innovative enrollment growth, college completion, a high-performing and engaged workforce, and organizational viability. In the meantime, "Forever Green: the Campaign for Northwest Missouri State University" is picking up steam and our most recent Northwest Foundation meeting exemplified commitment, passion and energy. We are making strides on gifts from individuals, corporations and foundations as we address academic excellence, scholarships, student life and other opportunities in which to invest in Northwest.

Furthermore, we have a great deal of synergy in conversations with partners and donors, and it is so exciting to see convergence and transformation across the University and within our community and across our partners. In fact, we recently received designation – along with K-12, community college and business partners – as a Missouri Innovation Campus.

October also was a month during which we welcomed several distinguished guests and highlighted Northwest's innovation and progress on a variety of fronts. A visit by Sen. Claire McCaskill, as part of her state tour to discuss the bipartisan Campus Accountability and Safety Act, highlighted the important relationship connecting our students and our University Police Department and the community policing efforts they have employed. Dr. Stuart Brand and our partners from Birmingham City University in the United Kingdom

joined us to renew our fruitful partnership to improve student engagement at our universities. And we hosted the Missouri Department of Economic Development's Division of Energy as part of its series of regional public meetings, which allowed Northwest an opportunity to showcase its decades-old approach to sustainable energy use and cost-savings measures.

Congratulations also to those candidates elected to public offices this week. We look forward to working with **Rep. XXX and Sen. XXX** to advance higher education in northwest Missouri.

Now, as we transition to the busy holiday season there are a multitude of opportunities for us to gather, be entertained and celebrate the season. Among them, Theatre Northwest presents "The Secret Garden," which opens Nov. 13 in Northwest's Studio Theatre and continues its run through Dec. 7. Also, the Madraliers present a fall concert at 8 p.m. Nov. 13, in the Charles Johnson Theater. We also host a national library conference this weekend – yet another opportunity for us to welcome guests to our community and for them to support our business community.

My challenge to you throughout this next month is to show gratitude to each other. Take some time to send a note of thanks to those you see making a difference for Northwest Missouri State and in our communities. Or as you're out and about, stop them for a moment to share your appreciation. Call out those people who go above and beyond in the name of our regional progress.

*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).*