

**Maryville Daily Forum  
Thursday, Dec. 4, 2014**

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

It is only fitting that I take this opportunity as we enter the holiday season to thank you for the contributions you – as members of Maryville and our surrounding communities – make every day to Northwest Missouri State and reflect on our successes during 2014. We are so appreciative of the passion and support you commit to our university, and we are proud of the role we play in delivering quality education in this region.

As I reflect on all that has occurred at Northwest during the last year, I think of the scholarly contributions of our faculty and staff – from research publications to the boards on which they volunteer and the honors they receive. I think about, to name one, Dr. Sue Myllykangas, associate professor of recreation, who is our newest recipient of the Governor's Award for Excellence in Education, and the energy she exhibits in the classroom every day. Our faculty and staff in departments throughout the institution are performing at high levels and helping to serve others in local, state, national and international efforts.

Northwest students have accomplished much in and out of the classroom in 2014, too. Northwest's student-operated radio station KZLX was awarded Station of the Year for the second consecutive year – bringing our national championship total to 15 across athletics and academics during the last five years. Our forensics team is part of that total, also, having earned four individual national championships last spring. And I think about students in our music, education, agriculture, business and geology programs who have been recognized this year with state honors, grant awards and international scholarships.

Northwest students also continue to give back generously to the community and causes that move them. Our student groups collect thousands of pounds of canned goods and household items each year for the Maryville Ministry Center. Additionally, students again donated blood during the biannual Student Senate blood drive, and student groups continue to support and raise awareness for philanthropies such as St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, for which students raised more than \$2,600 last month during the annual Colden Pond Plunge.

I'm thankful for our strong partnerships with the city of Maryville on initiatives such as the Fourth Street Improvement Project and with Nodaway County agencies, which so willingly lend their support to our Missouri Hope disaster training exercise at Mozingo Lake Recreation Park. I'm also thankful for the partnerships we are developing beyond northwest Missouri such as that with North Kansas City Schools and the Northland Center for Advanced Professional Studies program. I am thankful for strong enrollment, construction beginning on the Robert and Virginia Foster Fitness Center and the opportunity to celebrate the legacy of Dr. Dean L Hubbard with the renaming of our Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship in his honor.

I'm thankful for the direction Northwest is heading. We are moving forward on so many exciting and significant strategic opportunities. Thanks to our Board of Regents, Northwest Foundation Board and the work of so many dedicated and passionate employees, students and alumni. Make no mistake, it will take some head work and heart work. It will take

collaboration and partnership in ways we have not encountered, but I believe Northwest is positioned well to advance and create space from our competition.

Tonight, Mrs. J and I invite you to join us for the annual Holiday Tree Lighting at 5:15 p.m. at the Thomas Gaunt House. The ceremony will feature Horace Mann's Bearcat Choir as well as the Maryville High School Spectrum show choir. If you feel so inclined, please also support our philanthropic initiative in coordination with this year's tree-lighting – "Ruby's Pantry" – by bringing pet food that we will donate to the New Nodaway Humane Society.

Final exams at Northwest begin Monday, and on Dec. 12 we celebrate the achievements of more than 500 students who will receive their degrees at our winter commencement ceremony. Alumnus John Moore, who recently retired as chief operating officer of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, will provide the commencement address.

During these next few weeks, it is my hope that you may reflect on your own blessings this year and enjoy time with loved ones. On behalf of the Jasinski family and Northwest Missouri State, I wish you a safe and relaxing holiday season, and a happy 2015!

*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).*