

**Local newspaper column  
Thursday, June 20, 2019**

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

To the outsider, the pace may seem slower at Northwest Missouri State University during the summer months, after our traditional students depart the campus for internships, study abroad experiences or downtime away from their studies. I assure you, though, plenty is happening both on the campus grounds and behind the scenes as we prepare for the fall semester and strengthen Northwest's connection with our communities.

When we talk about the partnership that exists with our region and the commitment of our people to Northwest, there are few finer examples than John C. Redden Jr. Last week, we celebrated the legacy of "Big John," not just at Northwest, but in the Maryville community by dedicating and renaming our Power Plant in his honor. John, who passed away last November at the age of 72, had devoted 45 years to the University when he retired in 2014.

His impacts were many – from his involvement in multiple construction and renovation projects to his input in the launch of Northwest's alternative energy program. John was above buildings, like the Administration Building. He was within buildings, in the likes of Valk Center, Everett Brown Hall, the Garrett-Strong Science Building, and the Robert and Virginia Foster Fitness Center. And he was in the bowels of buildings such as Roberta Hall, the Thomas Gaunt House, Colden Hall and the Olive DeLuce Fine Arts Building. John dedicated every square inch and maximum effort to his work on the Northwest campus.

Through his dedication as a firefighter and to the Maryville community, John was focused on bettering communities through service, he gave maximum effort, every square inch of his life.

John helped fight the fire that destroyed 60 percent of Northwest's historic Administration Building on the night of July 24, 1979. We remember that transformational night in Northwest's history, too, and invite you to join us from 2 to 4 pm. Wednesday, July 24, as we commemorate the 40th anniversary of the fire and the rebirth Northwest experienced as a result of the hard work and vision of so many in the fire's aftermath. In conjunction with a program and refreshments in the Administration Building, our National Public Radio affiliate, KXCV, also will be open for tours in Wells Hall, where it moved after the fire.

In the meantime, our annual Summer Orientation Advisement and Registration program, or SOAR, which welcomes our first-year Bearcats to the campus and introduces them to the Maryville community, is underway and continues through June 26. While SOAR provides us a clearer snapshot of our fall enrollment, we are projecting an increase in overall enrollment this fall with the benefit of a significant projected increase in graduate enrollment.

So much more activity is taking place this summer that symbolizes Northwest's link to communities and families. In addition to our music camp for youth in grades 6-12 last week, Northwest hosts a slew of sports camps throughout the summer. Next week, we also host Camp CATastrophe, a camp aimed at helping older teens develop leadership, teamwork and decision-making skills in emergencies and other difficult situations.

This week, we welcomed our partner, Agrivision Equipment, and 24 area high school students to campus for the fourth annual Agrivision Equipment Group Precision Agriculture Summer Academy. The three-day program introduces high school students and agricultural educators to the ever-changing world of precision agriculture technologies through hands-on activities with state-of-the-art equipment and networking with industry professionals.

Next month, for the third consecutive summer, Northwest hosts the Missouri Broadcasters Association Radio Talent Institute, which brings broadcasting students together with broadcast professionals for an immersive 10-day training program in all aspects of the radio broadcasting arena.

All the while, our dedicated faculty and staff are teaching and leading – whether it’s in a classroom, through one of our many online programs, or guiding a group of students on a field experience well beyond the Northwest campus. Our Extended Leadership Team – Northwest’s strategic planning group – is revising our strategic plan and setting a revised course relative to strategic objectives, strategic themes and actions that center on learners, partners, our faculty and staff, and operations at Northwest.

We wish everyone a beautiful summer, and here’s looking forward to the fall semester.

*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).*