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News Release

For Immediate Release

Mobile Career Center Dedication Tuesday

Ozarks residents will have access to job-hunting and job-training assistance closer to home on the new Mobile Career Center that will visit communities in the Workforce Investment Board’s seven-county region.

The Mobile Career Center will be dedicated at 2:30 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 2, 2010, at the Jefferson Avenue Footbridge on Commercial Street in Springfield.

The satellite-equipped bus has 13 computers, phone, a Smart Board, and an accessible workstation for customers with disabilities. Equipped with Internet access, the Mobile Career Center will allow customers to access job-search sites and complete unemployment insurance reporting requirements for laid-off workers. In addition, the unit is expected to eventually provide other job-related services such as online and classroom training, employer organization meetings and Rapid Response services for plant closings or mass layoffs. With its advanced technology, the Mobile Career Center also can be used as an emergency command center to supplement other emergency-management resources.

The Mobile Career Center was purchased with $255,000 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds, which were appropriated last spring. It comprises about six percent of the total ARRA funds the Missouri Career Center has received. The other 94 percent was designated for job retraining for low-income adults and those affected by business closures and cutbacks, a Summer Youth Work Experience program, and the Jobs for Americans Graduates program.

The Missouri Career Center serves customers in Greene, Christian, Dallas, Polk, Taney, Stone and Webster counties from offices in Springfield and Branson. With the addition of the Mobile Career Center, services can be provided directly to customers through regularly scheduled stops in area towns. It will provide more opportunities for both job seekers and employers to use the services without having to travel regularly to Springfield or Branson.

“This will be a significant improvement for customers who have to spend the time, gas, or babysitting money to come into Missouri Career Center offices if we can take the services to them,” said Bill Dowling, Director of the Missouri Career Center. “Just this past year we have seen more than 152,000 visits to our Springfield Center and just fewer than 50,000 visits to our Branson Center. We are straining to handle the number of people trying to use our services, so this mobile center also will help the permanent offices respond to the needs of employers and job seekers.”
Speakers at Tuesday’s dedication will include: Greene County Associate Commissioner Harold Bengsch, who is the Chair of the Council of Local Elected Officials Board that governs the Career Center; Springfield Mayor Jim O’Neal; and William Skains, Chair of the Ozark Region Workforce Investment Board.

Tours of the bus will be available after the dedication ceremony. A second ceremony is planned later in February in Buffalo, the first regional community to host the bus.

For more information, contact: Bill Dowling, Workforce Development Director, 887-4343.