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News Release

For Immediate Release

City and OTC Discuss Workforce Development Merger

The City of Springfield and Ozarks Technical Community College (OTC) are considering merging their workforce development programs. The merger being considered would transfer the Department of Workforce Development from the City to OTC.

OTC originally approached the City a few years ago with the idea, but City Manager Greg Burris said he just recently went back to OTC to ask if they were still interested because of the current vacancy in the Workforce Development Director position.

Discussions are in preliminary stages, but Burris took the issue to the City's 62 Department of Workforce Development employees last week to assist with the consideration.

"This is not a done deal, but I am committed to doing the analysis to determine whether this would be in the overall community's best interest," Burris explained.

When the Workforce Development Department became part of the City, OTC did not exist.

Burris asked employees to form groups to address questions and concerns about: pay and benefits; logistics; and details of work projects, such as grants, contracts and duties.

He reassured employees that OTC has made a commitment to meet employee needs, and to ensure a smooth and fair transition if the change is made. Burris and OTC Chancellor Hal Higdon will work together to address salary and benefit issues.

Both hope to make a decision by the end of the year.

"I recognize that just going through the process will be stressful for some of our employees, but I don't want to rush into a decision without fully vetting the pros and cons."

Burris asked employees to do two things: "Begin writing down your questions and keep an open mind."

For more information, contact: Cora Scott at 417-864-1009 or 417-380-3352 or Joel Doepker at 417-631-9026.

About the City's Department of Workforce Development

The City's Department of Workforce Development provides services to businesses and job seekers in the southwest Missouri region through the Ozarks Region Missouri Career Center,

located in Springfield. Springfield's Career Center is part of a statewide network made possible by the Missouri Division of Workforce Development (DWD), the state agency that administers Missouri's workforce system in partnership with local workforce investment boards.

The Local Workforce Investment Board and the State of Missouri's Division of Workforce Development (DWD) entered into an agreement in 2000 to establish the Missouri Career Center (MCC) in Springfield to provide workforce development programs and services in a single location. The Career Center recently moved to a new location at 2900 E. Sunshine. The City is currently the designated service provider for the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs for the seven-county Ozark Region. The Local Workforce Investment Board and its agent, the City of Springfield Department of Workforce Development, have operated training programs for approximately 30 years.

Twenty-two State of Missouri DWD employees, funded through the Wagner-Peyser silo, are co-located with 62 WIA staff funded by the City of Springfield at the Missouri Career Center.

About OTC's Center for Workforce Development

Staffed by experienced trainers and consultants, the Center for Workforce Development at Ozarks Technical Community College offers customized training designed to develop businesses and enhance the local workforce. The Center provides a variety of training options, including courses in lean manufacturing, management development, and quality and process improvement, as well as computer and technical workshops. In addition, the Center operates the Transport Training Institute and is an authorized OSHA Training Institute provider. For more information on these and other training opportunities available through the Center for Workforce Development, visit www.otc.edu/workforce.