NWACC Will Host COMBASE Conference

Leaders of Two-Year Colleges Gather in Northwest Arkansas

BENTONVILLE, Ark. (September 28, 2012) – Northwest Arkansas will host almost 40 community college leaders from across the country at the 2012 COMBASE Conference from Sunday, Sept. 30, to Tuesday, Oct. 2.

This year’s conference will be at the Embassy Suites in Rogers.

COMBASE is a consortium of community colleges voluntarily joined together for the purposes of: identifying, validating, and employing exemplary practices in community-based and performance oriented education; and sharing their expertise and experience through research, publications, professional development programs, networking and other means.

Dr. Becky Paneitz, NorthWest Arkansas Community College President and a former COMBASE president, will open the conference with welcome remarks Sunday. “COMBASE has been a champion of innovation for many years,” Paneitz said. “It has been a leader in fostering collaboration among community college administrators to share best practices for providing community-based and performance-oriented education to local communities.”

Established in the 1970s by 10 community colleges with a common interest in community-based education, COMBASE has become a leading national organization. More than 50 institutions in 22 states support and participate in an annual program including a national leadership conference, institutes and seminars, research, networking events, and a publication series.

Paneitz and a team from NWACC were instrumental in bringing the conference to the region. The conference committee includes Susan Pike, Teresa Whitmire, Diane Boss, Jean Anderson and Cheryl Wagner.

“This is a great opportunity for community college leaders from throughout the country to get to know more about our region, its vibrant business community and its spectacular beauty,” Paneitz said. Attendees will have the opportunity to gather at Crystal Bridges Museum of American
Art for a tour, cocktail reception and dinner on Monday evening. Shane Broadway, interim director of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, will be a special guest at the dinner.

Representatives from NWACC will be among the presenters at this year’s conference.

Teresa Whitmire, Executive Director of Business Development at the College, will join Jerry Weissberg, Vice President and General Manager for ed2go/Cengage Learning, in presenting “Building Today’s Community Workforce to Sustain Tomorrow’s Growth – Leveraging Strategic Partnerships – The ‘Natural’ Connection.”

Stephanie Smith, Regional Director for the National Child Protection Training Center, will join Dr. Jerry Vervack, Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences at NWACC, Jerry Rose, Criminal Justice Coordinator, and Hadley Hindmarsh, an attorney and member of the NWACC Board of Trustees, to offer a forum titled “Partnering for Protection: A New Vision of Education for Child Protection Professionals.” NWACC is home to the National Child Protection Training Center’s Southern Region site. The session will outline the NCPTC/NWACC partnerships and methodology, detail the partnership’s innovative CAST curriculum and professional development focus, and explain how the Southern Region NCPTC partnership leverages its resources to support other colleges throughout the region. NCPTC promotes and enacts a new vision of education providing current and future child protection professionals the skills necessary to sustain careers intervening, investigating, prosecuting, and preventing child abuse.

NorthWest Arkansas Community College is a smart choice for students wanting to pursue quality higher education. As an accredited institution through The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, NWACC is a public two-year institution that serves and strengthens its surrounding communities in Benton and Washington counties by helping our students maximize their potential and exceed expectations. With state-of-the-art facilities, NWACC provides excellent academic instruction and workforce training needed to succeed, offering personalized attention from highly respected faculty, staff, and administrators. For more information, visit www.nwacc.edu.