REGIONAL STEWARDSHIP AWARDS $288,000 TO REGION

BY BRYN TURNER

MURRAY—Murray State University’s Office of Regional Stewardship and Outreach recently announced Regional Grants totaling $288,000 to fund eight specific projects in the 18 county service region for the 2009-2010 academic term.

“The goal of Regional Stewardship,” President Dunn said, “is to take the power of the university and work it in ways that responds to the needs as articulated by the region.” The funding comes directly from the state through the Council on Postsecondary Education.

The STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Initiative received the largest grant amount this year. Administered through the College of Science, Engineering and Technology, this initiative will include various activities in the region: Project Lead the Way, Girls in Engineering Day, JET Teams Competitions, National Boy and Girl Scout Merit Engineering Day and many more. If also searches to develop an articulation agreement with Madisonville Community College Advanced Industrial Integrated Technology Program to build a 2+2 course in engineering as well as create an “Institute for Manufacturing Workforce Development.”

Another award will continue a leadership program created last year called the School Administrators’ Leadership Academy. This initiative combines the New Principal’s Mentor Program and New Superintendent’s Leadership Academy established last year and builds on the strengths of these two programs with more sensitive assessments of need and stakeholder involvement. It will be administrated as a partnership between the College of Education and the West Kentucky Educational Coop. Last year, approximately 50 school administrators participated in the leadership academy.

The Cultural Awareness Series will be funded to support activities which seek to increase cultural awareness and arts appreciation of students throughout the service region and introduce educational opportunities through the College of Humanities and Fine Arts at MSU. The activities will focus on working with regional providers of cultural arts to enhance awareness and involvement, as well as target events to school-age children and young adults.

The Middle and High School Mathematics Improvement Project, which was submitted by the West Kentucky Educational Cooperative to address the declining trend in student math achievement from elementary to middle school and on into high school, also received funding. Through this project, trained math scholars will conduct research-based professional development activities with middle and high school teachers in 28 school districts in the 18-county service region.
Other recipients include the Center for Entrepreneurship, sought by the College of Business and Public Affairs to continue the conference started last year to promote entrepreneurship in the region; a Regional Grant Writer; Project ACCESS, which seeks to strengthen linkages to regional high school programs and increase the number of students pursuing postsecondary education in the food and agricultural sciences; and a Rural Children’s Health/Education Service, which will work to improve access to quality health services, education, and system referral for underserved children.

According to Gina Winchester, Executive Director “These projects capture the best of what MSU has to offer academically to the region in addressing the concerns as identified by the Regional Stewardship Advisory Council.” With these endeavors, MSU through the Office of Regional Stewardship and Outreach pushes toward the vision of a united west Kentucky changing its culture to succeed in the new century by expanding educational attainment opportunities in the region.