



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Meritrust Credit Union pledges \$225,000 to support WSU's Center for Entrepreneurship

Meritrust Credit Union has agreed to three years of financial support for key outreach programs of the Wichita State University Center for Entrepreneurship, the WSU Foundation announced today.

“This wonderful gift increases the center’s ability to provide training and interaction with successful business people to the students, entrepreneurs and companies driving Kansas’ economic growth,” said Lou Heldman, interim director of the WSU Center for Entrepreneurship.

Meritrust, a provider of personal and commercial financial services, has pledged \$225,000 over three years to support two major speaker series in the Center for Entrepreneurship. The credit union wants to strengthen its relationship with Wichita State to serve students and businesses in the region, said James Nastars, Meritrust president and CEO.

“We want to align with the university in areas that reflect our core values and our business mission, which includes helping our business members succeed,” Nastars said. “These two programs offered through the Center for Entrepreneurship provide training and assistance we think will benefit entrepreneurs, businesses and students alike.”

Meritrust has been a sponsor of Barton Business Week at Wichita State, which brings together Kansas business representatives and students in the W. Frank Barton School of Business for a week of meetings and events each spring. It also supports WSU athletics and student services. It is a Lifetime Distinction Member in the WSU Foundation Fairmount Society.

Heldman said the credit union’s gift would fund:

- The Meritrust Business Booster Series, up to 15 weekly workshops that begin Oct. 18 and will be held on Friday afternoons in Devlin Hall on the WSU campus. The

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fall lineup will feature topics including capitalizing on creative business ideas, analyzing consumer purchase decisions, franchising tips, branding strategies and website expertise.

- The Meritrust Entrepreneurship Forum Series, panels of successful business leaders or individual speakers addressing entrepreneurship topics. Admission is free; the events are held in the auditorium of Devlin Hall. The series will begin in spring 2014 and run through fall 2016. Among national speakers who have participated in previous years are David Green, founder and CEO of Hobby Lobby; Jimmy John Liautaud, founder and CEO of Jimmy John's Gourmet Sandwich Shops; and Maxine Clark, founder of Build-A-Bear Workshop.

Cindy Claycomb, interim dean of the W. Frank Barton School of Business, said Meritrust's support of the WSU Center for Entrepreneurship will help the center fulfill its mission to advance business creation and economic growth through education, research and community involvement.

"This partnership provides opportunities for our students and the Wichita community to engage with entrepreneurs and other business professionals on an ongoing basis," Claycomb said. "This is a meaningful commitment by Meritrust to our students and to area businesses, and a relationship we hope will continue for many years."

To learn more about the Meritrust Business Booster Series or to register for this fall's events, call 316-978-3000 or go to wichita.edu/cfe.

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