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Groundhog Day Launches Job Shadowing 2009

Mentoring boosts student career exploration

Shadows will be out and about this week as students and businesses kick off Job Shadow 2009. Once celebrated as Groundhog Job Shadow Day, this event now launches a yearlong initiative to expose students to the “real world” of careers.

Job shadowing is a valuable experience for students because it lets them see what it takes to succeed in careers that interest them, said Tom Quinn, assistant commissioner of career education for the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

“Students gain new appreciation for their education when they see skills and lessons applied in the workplace,” he said, adding students are also able to make better education and career decisions after experiencing a day-in-the-life of a professional.

Many job shadowing programs are conducted through schools with local chambers of commerce. Job shadow experiences can also be arranged by parents, school counselors, school programs, classes or community organizations.

Businesses benefit from job shadowing because it gains them recognition with potential future employees, giving them an edge in recruitment, and it can attract more business as students spread word of a good experience.

Schools and businesses that want to offer Job Shadow 2009 events in their communities can find resources on the National Job Shadow Coalition site, www.JobShadow.org, as well as on the site of coalition member Junior Achievement, www.JA.org.

Find tips on how to have a successful job shadow experience, as well as numerous other career exploration tools, at www.MissouriConnections.org, a site sponsored by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

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Full-length news release, quotes and fact sheet are available at www.dese.mo.gov/divcareered/missouri_connections_news_room.htm

The Missouri Connections Public Outreach Partnership workgroup represents a collaboration of state agencies concerned with education and workforce development who are helping inform and build awareness among the public, particularly students and potential students, of targeted careers, educational and industry trends, and workforce development priorities. Workgroup members represent the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; Department of Higher Education; Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development and Missouri Economic Research & Information Center; Missouri Center for Career Education; and Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Freelance writer is Anita Harrison.