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CONTACT: Steve O'Keefe, Director of
Community Relations & Marketing

John A. Logan College Receives President's Honor Roll Award for Service

School Honored for Distinguished Community Service

Carterville, Illinois— The Corporation for National and Community Service named John A. Logan College to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for exemplary service efforts and service to disadvantaged youth.

Launched in 2006, the Community Service Honor Roll is the highest federal recognition a school can achieve for its commitment to service-learning and civic engagement. Honorees for the award were chosen based on a series of selection factors including scope and innovativeness of service projects, percentage of student participation in service activities, incentives for service, and the extent to which the school offers academic service-learning courses.

John A. Logan College received recognition to the President's Honor roll for their project, "Cooperation helps Rebuild Careers" which is described below.

Unfortunately, layoffs are a part of life in the 21st Century economy. This is especially true in southern Illinois, where the area was already suffering from low wages and benefit-inclusive jobs. On the Friday before Christmas 2006, over 1000 workers at the Maytag/Whirlpool plant in Herrin, Illinois, lost their jobs. In early spring 2007, Technicolor Universal Media Services (TUMS) also closed its Pinckneyville plant with over 700 employees. In a display of remarkable cooperation, John A. Logan College (JALC) joined with Man-Tra-Con Corporation as well as representatives from other colleges, healthcare organizations, economic development agencies, Illinois Department of Employment Security, unions, private industries, social services to create The Transition Team: a multi-disciplinary task force. A health insurance program was negotiated between the local university and JALC for the displaced workers. JALC offered immediate assistance through the following initiatives:

- The College coordinated its educational departments, student services, and admissions counselors to visit with employees at plant sites prior to closure.
- Two Saturday College Opportunity fairs and job fairs were held.
- The College remodeled a suite of offices and commons area to create the Man-Tra-Con Center housing a college-services coordinator, a career specialist, and a study area and computer access for students.
- Volunteer mentor corps of JALC employees serves as mentors.
- Focus on Finance seminars were offered to help plan budgets.
- Tutors were employed.

Over 350 of these displaced workers enrolled in education programs at JALC. These students excelled academically with 40 percent of them named to either the JALC President or Vice President's List for academic achievement.

Dr. Julia Schroeder, Vice President for Instructional Services, a co-chair of the transition team was pleased with the involvement of the College on this project. "The College provides assistance with many groups and projects on campus. This project was a college wide effort to provide new opportunities for these displaced workers. The faculty and entire staff at the college have gone the extra mile and have supported these displaced workers. Darren Pulley, Associate Dean for Corporate Education, and another co-chair of the transition team also provided many hours of service to this project."

President Dr. Robert Mees stated that this project and these displaced workers have been an important focus for the college this past year. "I believe the formation of the transition team was an important facet to identify major obstacles and to find realistic solutions for these displaced workers. These workers are important to our community and the region that we serve. I also appreciate the tireless efforts of the employees on campus to ease the transition for these displaced workers from the work place to classes at the College." Dr. Mees also acknowledges the leadership roles that both Dr. Schroeder and Mr. Pulley played in this effort. Schroeder and Pulley were recently honored in Springfield with an Innovations Solutions Award at the Illinois Workforce Development Conference Awards banquet.

The Honor Roll is jointly sponsored by the Corporation, through its Learn and Serve America program, and the Department of Education, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, USA Freedom Corps, and the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation.

In congratulating the winners, U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings said, "Americans rely on our higher education system to prepare students for citizenship and the workforce. We look to institutions like these to provide leadership in partnering with local schools to shape the civic, democratic and economic future of our country."

Overall, the Community Service Honor Roll awarded six schools with Presidential Awards. In addition, four schools were recognized as Special Achievement Award winners, 127 as Honor Roll With Distinction members and 391 schools as Honor Roll members. In total, 528 schools were recognized. A full list is available at www.nationalservice.gov/honorroll.

"There is no question that the universities and colleges who have made an effort to participate and win the Honor Roll award are themselves being rewarded," said American Council on Education President David Ward. "Earning this distinction is not easy. But now each of these schools will be able to wear this award like a badge of honor."

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The Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering. The Corporation administers Senior Corps, AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America, a program that supports service-learning in schools, institutions of higher education and community-based organizations. For more information, go to <http://www.nationalservice.gov>.

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