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### PRESS RELEASE

#### March "Business of the Month" St. James R-1 School District

The St. James Chamber of Commerce would like to congratulate the Board of Education and employees of the St. James R-1 School District for its nomination and selection as March "Business of the Month."

The Vision Statement of the St. James R-I School District reads "We strive to provide a safe and nurturing educational environment where all students will acquire the skills, knowledge, and competencies necessary for successful participation in our changing society." The staff has also adopted the mantra "Learning, Whatever it Takes" as a slogan to exemplify their intentions as educators. These are the goals that are set for the Board of Education, administrators, teachers and every other employee of the district. It is also the goal that the District hopes to achieve through cooperation with parents and the community. It is a worthy vision. States Joy Tucker, Superintendent of School, "We are proud that we have achieved 'Distinction in Performance' through the Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education several times. It is testimony that our vision is working."

The St. James R-I School District is truly a "business" in this community. As an employer of more than 250 people, both full time and part time, they operate on an annual budget of more than \$15 million. The district is governed by a publicly-elected seven member Board of Education. They are responsible for the oversight of the budget and the policies and regulations that govern our public school. Although they are not a business in the traditional sense of the word, they are still an entity that provides a service. They are always mindful that it is their job to provide an education to the more than 1700 children enrolled in grades K-12. Additionally, the school serves children aged 3-5 in early childhood special education, oversees the Parents as Teachers program for families of children birth through age 3, and the Mel Carnahan Family Learning Center which serves Phelps County families with young children. The district also partners with Boys & Girls Town of Missouri on several educational fronts including Title I and special education for students who are housed at that facility. Their borders go from the north almost to Vichy and south to the Dent County line; west to V highway and east to Rosati. It is a large physical area covering more than 217 square miles and serving a diverse population.

The public school of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is far different from the one-room school house of the past. The St. James R (Reorganized)-I School District began in the late 1800's with the original school building located on Maramec Street (it is now a private residence) and the original high school (originally built in the late 1800's) which is still in use today. Eventually, the one-room school houses, which served grades 1-8 and were scattered about the area, were closed and consolidated into town. With this consolidation, the original school building on Maramec became too small and the Lucy Wortham James Elementary building was constructed in 1957. Throughout the years, the original high school and the LW James Elementary building were added on to and remodeled several times to accommodate the growing student enrollment. In 2001, a bond issue was passed and the new St. James Middle School was built. It was the first new building in 50 years for the school. In 2010, the L.W. James Elementary School is going to get another face lift with new additions and some much needed remodeling.

A dynamic service organization, the School District must grow and improve in order to continue to serve its students. They are passionate about what they do and who they are. They are passionate about education and serving this community.

Please join us in honoring the School District at the monthly Chamber luncheon to be held at the St. James R-1 Board room on Tuesday, March 16, 2010, at 11:30 a.m. (Cost of the luncheon is \$12.00. Please RSVP to the Chamber office by Friday noon, March 12.)