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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FROM: Jean Van Rensselar, McElroy Associates, 630-363-8081

RE: NIU and DCEDC offer Innovative Resources for Area Businesses

Remember that document you drafted and e-mailed to a colleague who made some revisions, downloaded it to a flash drive and sent it to her boss who made some changes, reformatted it into a compact file, and sent it to corporate?

Three days later, no one seems to know where it is or what it looks like.

This is where the abundant technology resources for area businesses at Northern Illinois University come in. Among the many programs, two notables are The Northern Illinois Technology Enterprise Center (NITEC) and the Operations Management and Information Systems OM & IS program.

Within OM & IS, there is the Information Consolidation program – which is proving to be a lifesaver for some of the largest corporations in the U.S. Dr. Charles Downing, Walmart Professor in Enterprise Technology Innovation at NIU, heads the program, which designs individual programs for businesses that are desperately looking for a way to track and centralize documents – basically to solve information overload.

“The reason this seems to be resonating with everyone is that it’s a necessity,” Downing said. “E-mail, spreadsheets, Word documents, and flash drives are all fantastic tools, but if left alone, they will create a giant decentralized imbroglio of information. We show organizations how to create one centralized information repository.”

So far, Downing and his students have flown to Walmart’s Arkansas headquarters to design a program and most recently, were asked to design a similar program for The McDonald’s Corporation in Oak Brook.

“Walmart company officials were extremely pleased with the results,” Downing said. “We knocked their socks off. Not long after than, McDonald’s saw what we did and wanted something similar.”

While the information consolidation system base is Microsoft SharePoint, each program is different.

“Whenever I speak at events about this, we are almost overwhelmed with requests for help,” Downing said. “While this is a common problem with most businesses today, each program we design is unique.”

The objective of OM & IS, is to participate in research, service, and consulting activities that benefit the business community, while NITEC - funded by NIU - identifies breakthrough technologies and helps entrepreneurs and established companies bring their technologies to market.

Paul Borek, executive director of the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation, explained that NIU’s business and technology resources are an incentive for businesses thinking of locating in DeKalb County.

“These aren’t run of the mill businesses resources,” he said. “The administration, faculty, and students at NIU have worked hard to provide assistance and innovation that businesses really need to stay on top of new technology and use it to their advantage. We like to say that ‘we have it all’ here in DeKalb County – it’s not just a slogan, we really do.”

Downing is available for speaking engagements and consulting. His phone number is 815-753-6381 and his email address is CDowning@NIU.edu.

For more information about DeKalb County development and business resources, contact Paul Borek by e-mail: Borek@DCEDC.org, or administrator Linda Heinisch: Heinisch@DCEDC.org. The phone number for both is 815-895-2711.