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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WIRED Initiative Partners with Southeast Missouri Hospital to Implement Paramedic-to-RN Bridge Program

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Cape Girardeau, Mo. – With support from the Southeast Missouri WIRED (Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development) Initiative, Southeast Missouri Hospital has implemented a paramedic-to-RN bridge training program to help southeast Missouri paramedics move into careers in nursing.

Southeast Missouri WIRED Initiative awarded the Southeast Missouri Hospital Foundation with grant funding to be used for the training program, which started in January.

Says Janet Witter, Southeast Missouri WIRED Initiative manager, “The WIRED Initiative is excited to be involved in continuing to build a highly-skilled healthcare workforce, and this partnership promises to provide real opportunities for quality careers in the medical profession. We would love to see this program succeed as a model for others like it through southeast Missouri.”

Southeast Missouri Hospital will collaborate with regional businesses, educational and medical facilities to provide the opportunity for paramedics considering a career change to move into a rewarding profession as an RN. The goal of the “Bridge to Better – Paramedic to RN” program is to provide training and to address current and future projected needs in the medical field for the southeast Missouri region.

“Southeast is proud to partner with the WIRED Initiative,” says Mary Burton-Hitt, executive director of the Southeast Missouri Hospital Foundation. “The ‘Bridge to Better – Paramedic to RN’ program can make a difference in the lives of many regional paramedics to help advance their careers to achieve positions that will be extremely rewarding to them, our area communities and the people we serve.”

Southeast Missouri Hospital College of Nursing and Health Sciences President Tonya Buttry said the college is “delighted to receive this grant. Preparing healthcare professionals to meet the growing needs of our region has been our mission since the college opened in 1990.” To date, the college has placed more than 500 registered nurses and many surgical technologists, medical technologists and radiographers in the healthcare workforce.

Buttry said building capacity in nursing and allied health programs is a critical element of addressing the region’s long-term healthcare needs. This need will only intensify, she added, noting that estimates reflect a need for 1.2 million new nurses in the U.S. by 2014.