

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

United Arab Emirates Donates \$500,000 to Joplin Schools

In the wake of the May 22, 2011 catastrophic tornado that damaged and destroyed much of Joplin, Missouri, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Embassy in Washington, DC, on behalf of the people of the UAE, has pledged a significant donation to Joplin Public Schools (JPS) to assist the school district in meeting its goal to provide all enrolled high school students with laptops at the start of the 2011-12 academic year. These laptops will allow students to attend “virtual classrooms” while Joplin High School is being rebuilt, and access educational resources, such as textbooks.

The UAE Embassy is providing an initial \$500,000 donation to support JPS’s “One-to-One” initiative, which aims to provide all 2,200 Joplin High School students with a personal laptop computer. In addition, the Embassy has issued a challenge grant, in which it will match, dollar-for-dollar, any funds donated to the “One-to-One” initiative, up to an additional \$500,000; bringing the total UAE Embassy grant to \$1,000,000. The Embassy issued the challenge in the hope that encouraging others to donate will help JPS swiftly meet its goal of issuing all students a laptop at the start of the school year.

“We are so fortunate to have the support from the UAE Embassy. This donation will help us reach our One-to-One Laptop Initiative goal and provide a truly interactive learning experience for our high school students,” comments Dr. C.J. Huff, superintendent of Joplin Schools. “This contribution will not only provide technology to Joplin High School, but also help prepare our students for 21st century jobs.”

Joplin Public High School, the system’s only high school, was one of three JPS facilities that were completely destroyed by the tornado. As students will be housed in a variety of locations as the district rebuilds, personal laptops will allow JPS faculty to deliver a continuous curriculum to students during this period of uncertainty. Further, these laptops will serve to benefit the system, and its students, as they prepare to meet the challenges of this technological age, through this recovery period and beyond.

“The entire world was touched by the devastation caused in Joplin by the May 22 tornado. Given the scale of the disaster, including the destruction of the community’s only high school, we felt it was important to provide assistance,” said Yousef Al Otaiba, UAE Ambassador to the US. “The One-to-One initiative is a truly innovative idea that will not only give current students the tools they need to start the school year, but position future JPS students on the cutting-edge of learning.”

JPS and the UAE Embassy anticipate this grant as the start of a longer-term partnership between the two organizations. JPS and the Embassy hope to work together to develop programming that will deepen cultural understanding and awareness between the US and the UAE.



For anyone interested in helping to meet the UAE Embassy's matching challenge grant for the "One-to-One" initiative by August 17th, please contact Kim Vann at 417-625-5202.

Additional Background:

Joplin Public Schools

The Joplin (Missouri) Public Schools provide K-12 educational instruction and a variety of other services to approximately 7,650 students in the City of Joplin (approximate population of 60,000), located in Jasper County in Southwest Missouri. During the May 22, 2011 storm, approximately half of the district's schools and an administration building suffered damage. There was a total loss of three facilities, including Joplin Public High School.

The "One-to-One" initiative builds upon the JPS iTEK Initiative, which merges student instruction and technology through, the provision and deployment of updated and integrated classroom display technology and hardware and software distribution, in order to 1) assist in re-creating a cohesive educational community; 2) to increase student engagement through technology, in spite of the lack of permanent classroom space availability; 3) to prepare Joplin High School students to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

The United Arab Emirates

The UAE is a source of stability, tolerance, innovation, and growth in the Arabian Gulf and around the globe. The United States and the UAE are reliable allies, with historical and present-day shared security and economic interests. In fact, the UAE is the largest export market for US goods in the Middle East and more US naval vessels visit UAE ports than any other port outside the United States. The United States and the UAE also enjoy growing social and cultural ties, and many US institutions in education, healthcare and the arts have formed collaborative partnerships with UAE entities.

Since its founding, a main pillar of the UAE's foreign policy has been focused on addressing global challenges through the use of foreign aid and humanitarian assistance. The UAE has also been a major contributor of emergency relief to regions affected by conflict and natural disasters, including deploying much-needed resources after the earthquakes in Haiti, Pakistan and Japan and to the United States following Hurricane Katrina.

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For Further Information, Contact:

Kim Vann, Director of Community Development
Joplin Schools Operations Center
417-625-5202 ext. 2038

