Entrepreneurship Week at Southeast Missouri State University

Events for Monday, Nov. 17

Get Started

Opening Ceremony & Keynote Address
Glenn Auditorium, Robert A. Dempster Hall
Noon - 1:30 p.m.

There are many in the entrepreneurship community of southeast Missouri capable of mentoring students, but few more inspiring than J. Kim Tucci. Mr. Tucci will challenge students to embrace innovation, imagination and creativity. To think big. To turn their ideas into reality. And to get started.

J. Kim Tucci, St. Louis born, raised and educated, possesses both undergraduate and graduate degrees in communication from Saint Louis University.

Tucci, along with his partner Joe Fresta and late partner John Ferrara founded the Pasta House Co. restaurant chain more than 30 years ago. Today, with 33 restaurants and more than 2,000 employees, The Pasta House Co. is the largest locally owned restaurant chain in Missouri. In cooperation with the Coca-Cola Corporation, The Pasta House Co. has established, "Reading, wRiting and Ravioli" which, to date, boasts the participation of 400 schools and 4,000 teachers in the St. Louis region. Its "Great Works of Art High School Contest" offers talented area high school students the opportunity to compete for college scholarships.

In 1985, Tucci along with Fresta, Ferrara, Luther Boykins and Joe Bergfeld founded the Caring and Sharing Program, a charitable foundation. Through this program and the support of their friends, more than 5,000 St. Louisans in need are fed every Christmas. Today the Caring and Sharing Program is not a holiday only activity, but helps families in need year round.

The St. Louis Business Journal has selected Tucci as one of the Top 100 Business Leaders in the St. Louis region.

The 2008 imagine it! Innovation Challenge will also kick-off at the Opening Ceremony when an everyday object will be revealed. Teams of Southeast students who are enrolled in any course, program or major will have four days to create as much “value” as possible from the object. Teams are encouraged to take action, challenge assumptions, seize opportunities, be innovative and imagine it! Prizes will be given in various categories and ideas showcased at the final event of the week on Friday, Nov. 21.

For more information, contact Dr. James Stapleton with the Southeast Missouri State University Center for Entrepreneurial Studies at (573) 651-2010 or jstapleton@semo.edu. Visit: cstl.semo.edu/ces