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Illinois Wesleyan Class Create Brand Identity for Bloomington-Normal Convention and Visitors Bureau

June 1, 2005

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Members of an Illinois Wesleyan graphic design class along with their professor Sherilyn McElroy have created the new logo and branding campaign for the Bloomington-Normal Area Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The plan was unveiled last month and is being used to market the Twin Cities with a theme of “The Big Small Town” and “The Small Big Town.” The colorful logo features a coneflower, which is native to the Illinois prairie.

This is the third project that one of McElroy's classes has undertaken in the past three years. Previously, her students created campaigns for the Bloomington cultural district and Uniquely Bloomington Downtown Association.

In fact, Crystal Howard, director of the Convention and Visitors Bureau, approached McElroy to do the work after seeing the presentation that an earlier class had made for the Uniquely Bloomington campaign.

“These are wonderful learning experiences for our students,” said McElroy. “In each instance we have come into a project after a marketing study has been conducted, so we have research available to us.

“Then our students do site visits with the various stakeholders. In the instance of the Convention and Visitors Bureau, I gave the students a list of locations that they should visit to get a better sense of the tone of the community.”

On other projects, the students began by creating a logo. But McElroy had already created the Convention and Visitors Bureau logo on her own because of time issues.

“This allowed us to jumpstart the process a bit so that we could begin with the branding,” she said. “We looked at other comparable communities and tried to develop a distinctive brand.”

According to McElroy, the Convention and Visitors Bureau had clear goals in mind, hoping to reach a variety of audiences but wanting to maintain a consistent message of being friendly and approachable.

“Not only do the students get a real-life experience in this process,” said McElroy, “but I think we are also doing a service for the community.”