

NEWS RELEASE: March 11, 2011

Greene County DWI Court receives national designation

The Greene County DWI Court was designated an Academy Courts today by the National Center for DWI Courts, in partnership with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. David Wallace, Director of the National Center for DWI Courts, presented the award this morning in the Div. 4 courtroom of Greene County Judicial Facility, before an audience of state and county judges, elected officials, law enforcement officials, court staff and DWI Court participants.

“There are over 500 DWI Courts in the nation, and Greene County has one of the best,” said Wallace.

The Greene County DWI Court uses accountability and long-term treatment to address the root causes of drunk driving: alcohol and other substance abuse. Participants are convicted DWI offenders who, rather than serving a jail or prison sentence, are placed under court-supervised probation. They are required to undergo intensive treatment and counseling, submit to frequent supervision and random drug and alcohol testing, obtain employment or vocational training and make regular appearances before a specially trained judge.

This is the second time Greene County has earned the three-year designation, the first one coming in 2008. As an Academy Court, Greene County serves as a training site and provides technical assistance for other communities interested in implementing DWI courts. The Greene County DWI Court is one of four Academy Courts in the nation. The other three are in Athens, Ga., Newport Beach, Calif., and Holland, Mich.

“DWI Courts save lives,” Wallace said. “These individuals are addicted to alcohol, and jail alone is not going to change that. The results show that DWI Court works.”

Other speakers included Missouri Supreme Court Chief Justice William Ray Price; the Honorable Thomas Mountjoy, Greene County Presiding Judge; and the Honorable Peggy Davis, Greene County Drug Court/DWI Court Commissioner. Also speaking at this morning’s event was Gary, a recent Greene County DWI Court graduate who gave his first name only. Gary detailed how the court had helped him turn his life around after 15 years in and out jail and alcohol treatment programs.

“Here is a vision of hope,” Gary said about DWI Court. “You don’t have to live that way any more, if you take advantage of this program.”

For more information, visit www.dwicourts.org/learn/about-dwi-courts/dwi-academy-court. Or call the Honorable Peggy Davis, Greene County Drug Court/DWI Court Commissioner, or Marilyn Gibson, Drug Court/DWI Court Administrator, at 417-829-6159; or Jenny Fillmer Edwards, Greene County Public Information Officer, at 417-829-6019 or 417-224-5510.

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