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Treasurer of State, Crowley's Ridge Development Council Launch College-Savings Program

Arkansas 529 plans to benefit low-income students in Northeast Arkansas

Jonesboro – Treasurer of State Dennis Milligan, whose office administers the Arkansas 529 College-Investing Plan, announced a partnership today with Crowley's Ridge Development Council Inc. (CRDC) that will benefit first-grade students in the Delta Region of Northeast Arkansas.

In recognition of national College Savings Month in September, CRDC will seed an estimated total of 1,900 college-savings accounts through the Arkansas 529 College-Investing Plan throughout the eight counties it serves, and the Plan is matching those funds up to \$15,000.

In the eight counties serviced by Crowley's Ridge Development Council, there are 40,785 children – or 58.49% – who are living in households with income below 200% of the federal poverty level. To help combat poverty and encourage post-secondary education, the Arkansas 529 College Investing Plan and the CRDC are partnering to provide the gift of college to students throughout the Delta Region of Northeast Arkansas.

"Our Arkansas 529 College-Investing Plan has been looking for a way to get involved in this area," Milligan told the crowd at Arkansas State University. "We believe in the importance of furthering one's education beyond high school, however that may be, whether it's a four-year college like ASU or a two-year school like East Arkansas Community College in Forrest City. It is my hope that every student in Arkansas has the opportunity to further their education, regardless of their family's financial background."

The first scholarships will be funded to first-grade students in Poinsett County, said Tim Wooldridge, executive director of the CRDC. CRDC estimates to serve close to 280 first grade students in the 2017-2018 academic year through the pilot initiative.

"Our hope is that we can expand this program throughout our entire eight-county outreach area in northeast Arkansas," Wooldridge said.