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**\*\*PHOTO OPPORTUNITY\*\***

**WESTAR ENERGY DEDICATES WILLIAM E. BROWN  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER**

TOPEKA, Kan., June 2, 2011 — Westar Energy will conduct a dedication ceremony at 2 p.m., Monday, June 6 at its newly opened professional development center in North Topeka, 801 N.E. US Hwy 24 (map attached).

The center is being dedicated in honor of the company's previous president and chief operating officer, William E. Brown. Brown retired from the company in 1997 after 33 years of service in various leadership positions. He passed away Sept. 20, 2000. He was a pioneer of his time in developing a highly skilled and trained workforce. The company's present officer team named the center after him to honor his vision of educating tomorrow's leaders and a skilled workforce.

The center includes not only traditional classrooms but also equipment to train field employees, power plant personnel and other skilled craft positions. Linemen can practice techniques and safety skills inside several training bays even in the worst of weather. Power plant professionals can hone their skills on pumps, valves, electrical switches, hydraulic and rigging equipment essential to becoming experts in their field.

Additionally, the center is home to Westar's pre-qualification program for apprentice linemen candidates to test their aptitude for the rigors of line work. This program helps the company build a stronger workforce and in the long run save money by screening out early those who might not be suited to the challenging conditions of being a lineman.

Recently, Westar officials met with Topeka school district officials about hosting career nights for high school students interested in pursuing skilled trades such as those prevalent at the company. This program will help address the considerable challenge of an aging workforce as well as show students that college isn't their only option for successful careers. Hosting parents and students once a month at career nights will expose them to professions in a trade or craft such as linemen, substation journeymen, relay technicians, power plant control room operators, etc. The career night proposal met with great enthusiasm from school superintendents and administrators.

Dedication speakers include Bill Moore, chief executive officer, and Doug Sterbenz, executive vice president and chief operating officer, Westar Energy; Tom Ellis, vice president of development, Washburn University Foundation; Hal Gardner, vice president, Topeka Public Schools Board of Education and executive director, Support Learning Foundation; and Marsha Sheahan, vice president, public relations, Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce. Chamber ambassadors will conduct a ribbon cutting following remarks. The dedication ceremony will be followed by tours of the center.

Invited guests include the extended Brown family, former and current Westar employees, city officials and North Topeka economic development organizations.

"Bill Brown fostered innovative policies and initiatives for Westar Energy, leading the company through a time of sweeping changes and a movement to deregulate the electric power

industry,” said Sterbenz. “He truly was a pioneer of his time in developing a highly skilled and trained workforce. We know he would be very proud today not only to have such a great facility bear his name, but also because the company he worked so hard for still holds true to its belief in providing customers with safe, reliable electric energy service, and doing so with highly trained employees.

“To be successful, Westar Energy must have as one of its core competencies the ability to attract, train and retain the best, brightest people to serve our customers. This facility will be a key part of that strategy.”

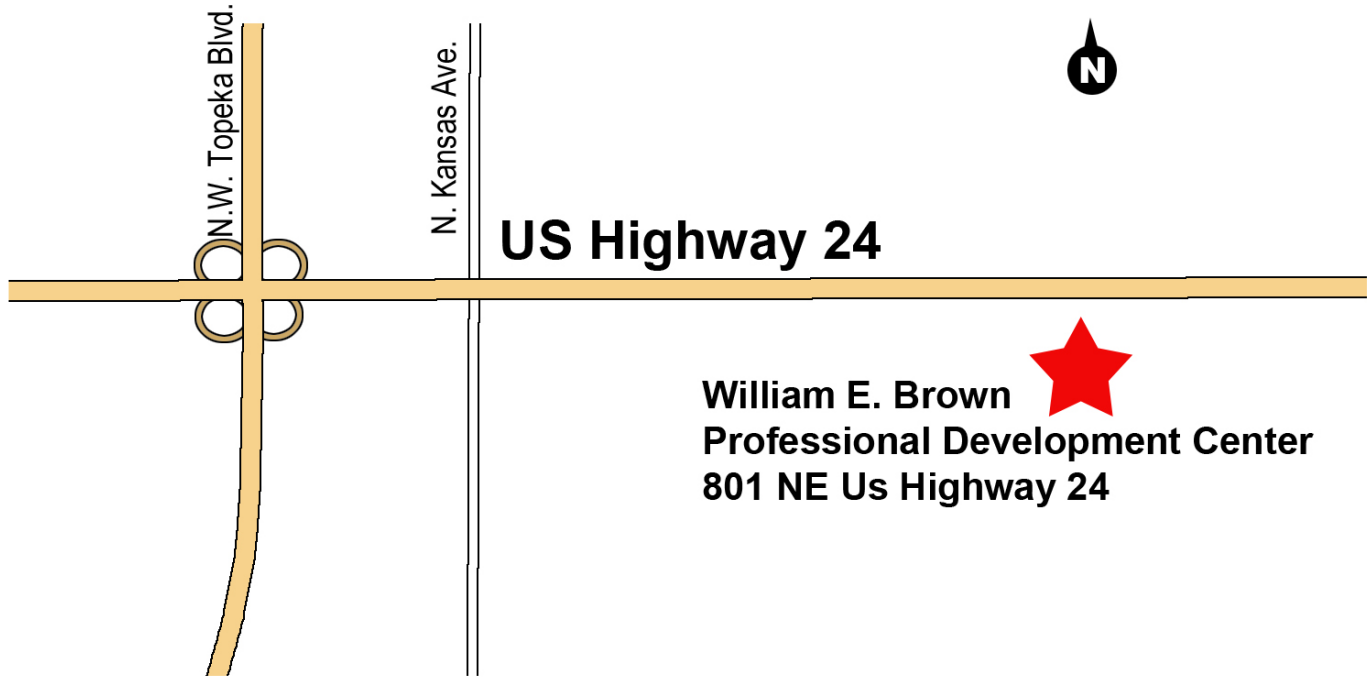
The William E. Brown Professional Development Center contains two floors with four meeting and conference rooms, training staff offices, five training labs and outdoor lineman training facilities. It will attract numerous out-of-town visitors to local restaurants and overnight stays at local hotels, further enhancing North Topeka’s growing economic development potential.

**Directions to the center:** The William E. Brown Professional Development Center is located at 801 N.E. US Highway 24. From N.W. Topeka Blvd., travel east on U.S. Highway 24 for one mile, exiting to south frontage road. The center is on the south side of the highway off the frontage road. Map attached.

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Westar Energy, Inc. (NYSE: WR) is the largest electric utility in Kansas, providing electric service to about 687,000 customers in the state. Westar Energy has about 6,800 megawatts of electric generation capacity and operates and coordinates more than 34,000 miles of electric distribution and transmission lines.

For more information about Westar Energy, visit us on the Internet at <http://www.WestarEnergy.com>.



**From N.W. Topeka Blvd. travel east on US Highway 24 for one mile. The training center is on the south side of the road.**