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UA WALTON COLLEGE'S BUSINESS FORECAST 2003 LUNCHEON TO FEATURE NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED ECONOMISTS

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. - The Sam M. Walton College of Business at the University of Arkansas will host a panel of the nationally recognized economists for its ninth annual Business Forecast luncheon on Friday, January 31, 2003. The event will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Northwest Arkansas Convention Center, Springdale, Ark.

John Tyson, chairman and CEO, Tyson Foods Inc., will moderate the Business Forecast 2003 panel of economists, which includes:

- Duncan H. Meldrum, chief economist, Air Products and Chemicals Inc., Allentown, Penn.;
- Ross DeVol, director of regional and demographic studies, Milken Institute, Santa Monica, Calif.;
- Jeffery T. Collins, director of the Center for Business and Economic Research in the Walton College at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Ark.

Walton College Dean Doyle Z. Williams said, "We were delighted that this panel of outstanding economists accepted our invitation to join us. This is an opportunity for businesses in Northwest Arkansas and the region to hear first hand what the experts think about the business climate in the coming year."
Williams added, "This event is an outreach of the Walton College and the Center for Business and Economic Research. We are always grateful for the support of our many fine sponsors, who make this event possible. Last year, we had 640 in attendance, and we expect that many this year, given the uncertainties in the economy that businesses face."

Tyson also is a member of the Tyson Foods executive committee. He has previously worked as a purchasing manager and retail sales manager for Tyson Foods and served as president of its beef and pork and international divisions. He also previously served as vice chairman. He was Tyson Foods’ political liaison to Washington and the state of Arkansas. The Arkansas Poultry Federation selected him its “Man of the Year” in 1994. He holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Southern Methodist University. He currently serves on the board of directors for the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence.

Meldrum will cover the international economy. Air Products and Chemicals Inc. is the largest global supplier of electronic materials, hydrogen, helium and select performance chemicals with annual revenues of $5.7 billion, operations in 30 countries and 18,000 employees. Meldrum joined Air Products in 1979 as an analyst in the management sciences department, became manager of the applied economics and statistics group in 1983, and senior economist in 1984. He assumed his present position in the Corporate Development Office in 1992. Prior to joining Air Products, Meldrum served on active duty in the U.S. Navy as an aviator and operations research specialist. A native of Penn., he holds a bachelor’s of science degree from the U.S. Naval Academy, a master’s of science degree in Operational Research from the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, and a Ph.D. in economics from Lehigh University. He serves as vice president of the National Association for Business Economics and a member of the Conference for Business Economists, American Economics Association, the chemical industry’s Economics Group and the National Business Economics Issues Council.

DeVol will cover the national economy. The Milken Institute is an economic think tank, a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) nonpartisan enterprise founded in 1991. DeVol’s research focuses on the dynamics of regional economic growth. He is an expert on the so-called knowledge-based economy and how regions can prepare to compete in it. Prior to joining the Institute, DeVol was senior vice president of WEFA, Inc. (formerly Wharton Econometric Forecasting), where he supervised their Regional Economic Services group. He is the author of numerous studies including America’s High-Tech Economy and The Impact of September 11 on U.S. Metropolitan
DeVol earned his masters in economics at Ohio State University. The Milken Institute actively communicates with opinion leaders in business, finance, government, academia, media, and the non-profit sector, and has a wide-ranging cooperative research program with these groups.

Collins will cover the local and state forecast. He also is an assistant professor of economics in the Walton College. He oversees applied economic research as part of the College's outreach mission. Recent studies have been conducted for Mercury Energy Inc., Beverly Enterprises Inc. and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In addition, the Center for Business and Economic Research is presently working with the cities of Fayetteville and Lowell, and in conjunction with the University of Arkansas Community Design Center in the cities of Pea Ridge and Brinkley. Collins earned a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Tennessee.

The Walton College's Center for Business and Economic Research is a public service/outreach organization whose mission is to serve its constituents with the highest quality research support; basic and applied business and economic analysis; timely, relevant business, economic and related public policy information; and other outreach activities. In addition to supporting research within the College, the Center supports economic development by providing economic and demographic data and analysis to business, government, and individuals.

Registration forms will be mailed the end of December. For more information on sponsorships or reservations for Business Forecast 2003, contact the Center for Business and Economic Research, Sam M. Walton College of Business, Donald W. Reynolds Center for Enterprise Development, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR 72701, 479-575-4151, fax 479-575-7687, or e-mail: cberinfo@cavern.uark.edu

To register online, visit the Business Forecast Web site at: http://www.uark.edu/depts/cberinfo/busfor/