

MasterCard opens in WingHaven

'This is the future for the state of Missouri' says Governor Holden

By Alan George
Staff writer

"This is the future for the state of Missouri," Gov. Bob Holden told more than 200 state and local officials Friday during opening festivities for the MasterCard International Global Technology and Operations headquarters in O'Fallon.

"We've got great reason to celebrate," Holden said. "Over 1,000 high-tech, high-wage jobs were kept here in Missouri and over 1,000 new jobs were created. I believe a great portion of Missouri's bright future lies our ability to position ourselves as a key player in the information technology of the future."

Jerry McElhatton, president of MasterCard, said the new, 550,000-square-foot facility, located in the 1,200-acre WingHaven development, is the worldwide nerve center for processing MasterCard transactions.

"Nearly two years ago today, we broke ground on this site," he said. "We'd like to thank the state of Missouri and its departments of Economic Development and Transportation for their efforts at making it possible for MasterCard to locate on this site, with this interchange, and with the significant improvements to Highway 40-61 that are underway and planned for the future."

McElhatton said the project would not



Gov. Bob Holden addresses a crowd of more than 200 state and local dignitaries Friday during opening festivities for the MasterCard International Global Technology and Operations headquarters in O'Fallon. Ryan Prewitt photo

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have been possible without the efforts of city officials, especially O'Fallon Mayor Paul Renaud.

"Our new location is the result of the focused leadership of Paul Renaud, who believed that MasterCard could be the cornerstone of a high-tech community in the city of O'Fallon," he said. "He's a man that's putting O'Fallon on the map as one of the fastest growing and vibrant cities in the state, if not the whole country. We're pleased to make his vision a reality today."

Already more than 800 employees are at the site and about 50 more per day are scheduled to start work from now to the end of October, McElhatton said.

The deciding factor that determined whether MasterCard would stay in the St. Louis area

was the late Gov. Mel Carnahan, McElhatton said.

"Gov. Carnahan made it his personal mission to leverage the resources of the state of Missouri to keep MasterCard and our employees here," he said. "We are placing, on the front of the building, a permanent plaque in his honor."

Holden said MasterCard is one of the industries that will play a major role in attracting more information technology businesses to Missouri in the 21st century.

"This project in particular involved more than three years of discussion and collaboration between company officials and local and county officials, the St. Louis RCGA (Regional Chamber and Growth Association), and our state departments of Economic Development and Transportation," he said. Carnahan repeatedly touted

the benefits of the MasterCard project during the last years of his administration, Holden said.

"He saw that this could not only be an economic boom for St. Charles County, but more importantly for the state of Missouri," Holden said. "The success of projects like this will allow his name to live on forever."

Few events in O'Fallon's history have been as seriously anticipated as the MasterCard opening, Renaud said.

"We are grateful and proud to be the home of MasterCard's new campus," he said. "We have WingHaven, and I think that's worth repeating. We have WingHaven. I'm proud to say that MasterCard is, and probably will be for a long time, the crown jewel of this new, prestigious business community."