

## ***MEDIA RELEASE***

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# **Student success workshop features life choices from reformed criminal**

*Saskatchewan MLA Serge LeClerc spoke to SIAST Basic Ed students about his transformation from lawbreaker to lawmaker*

**Monday, January 11, 2010** – SIAST Woodland Campus hosted Saskatoon Northwest MLA Serge LeClerc, who presented his life story - one of transformation from one of Canada's most-feared criminals to a respected politician and author. The presentation was made to nearly 200 Adult Basic Education students.

SIAST education counsellor Lani Scragg said, "Three years ago we began weekly student success workshops to connect students with community role models and services in the city. Topics include budgeting, housing, nutrition, family violence, drugs and alcohol and much more." She added, "When students see a face from their community in the school they make a real connection, and we find they are more likely to reach out to a service."

SIAST Woodland's Adult Basic Education Program Head Terry Wallace said, "Serge's story is a real example of someone now part of our community who had a troubled past and consciously changed the course of his actions to become a well respected individual. Starting with a Grade 5 education, rehabilitating himself and working to earn several degrees sends a strong message that anyone can overcome difficult challenges."

LeClerc, author of *Untwisted: From Lawbreaker to Lawmaker*, lived in poverty, spent time in a reform school and was a gang leader, drug addict and kingpin who spent 21 years in prison. LeClerc spoke about the course of events that led him to change his life.

In 2000, LeClerc became the only crime figure in Canadian history to be granted a full national pardon through an act of Parliament. Police chiefs, Crime Stoppers presidents

and RCMP inspectors campaigned for him, citing his work with Crime Stoppers International. In 2007, LeClerc became a bestselling Canadian author and was elected as a Member of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

LeClerc is also the Legislative Secretary to the Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing.

SIAST is Saskatchewan's primary public institution for post-secondary technical education and skills training, recognized nationally and internationally for its expertise and innovation. More than 13,000 students are registered in SIAST programs, which touch every sector of the economy; additionally, the organization draws almost 32,000 individual course registrations. It operates campuses in Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon, and provides a number of courses and programs through distance education.

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