FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ♦ FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT JOAN I. DUFFY (501) 569-8600

Southwest Power Pool “Power Systems Lab” Created at UALR’s CyberCollege

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (August 3, 2006) – A new Southwest Power Pool (SPP) Power Systems Laboratory will be open for Systems Engineering students later this month at UALR’s Donaghey College of Information Science and Systems Engineering (also known as the CyberCollege). The new lab was made possible by a major contribution from Southwest Power Pool, helping foster student research into electronic power systems.

SPP recently donated $95,000 to UALR to establish the new Power Systems Laboratory, and the Arkansas Electric Cooperatives contributed $5,000 for additional lab equipment. The contributions have provided advanced software, hardware, computer systems, electrical motors, and other technical equipment for the new laboratory to effectively teach power transmission. The gift will allow the CyberCollege to enhance its new degree programs in mechanical and electrical engineering, offering its students and faculty a state-of-the-art power engineering lab environment.

“This gift is in direct response to UALR’s Fast Forward challenge to local business leaders to invest in central Arkansas. Southwest Power Pool is investing in what we believe will soon be a nationally-recognized electrical engineering program. SPP is excited about this opportunity to partner with UALR in educating our future workforce,” said Bruce Rew, Executive Director of Contract Services for SPP.

Dr. Mary L. Good, Dean of the CyberCollege, said that the gift from SPP would allow the College to quickly supply more highly-skilled electrical engineers to operate and maintain the nation’s power grids. The College’s electrical engineering program is
now one of four systems engineering degree options provided by the professionally accredited program, which also includes mechanical engineering, computer engineering, and telecommunications engineering.

SPP is a regional transmission organization responsible for maintaining reliability and coordinating transmission across 225,000 square miles. The Little Rock-based company employs approximately 226 people and is one of Arkansas’ largest employers of electrical engineers. SPP plans to enroll some of its engineering staff in the new electrical engineering courses at UALR, in addition to its employees participating in the College’s new Systems Engineering Certificate Program for working professionals. SPP is a group of 46 member companies serving more than four million customers in eight southwestern states.

The Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas serve about 460,000 people in Arkansas and surrounding states, providing them with electricity to power their homes, businesses and farms. The company has service areas that cover more than 60 percent of Arkansas’ land area and serve members in 74 of the state’s 75 counties.

# # #