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January 20, 2000

For Immediate Release:

FORMER EIU PROFESSOR ATTENDS NSC MEETING IN NEW ORLEANS

CHARLESTON – Retired Eastern Illinois University business Professor Foster C. Rinefort of Charleston recently attended the National Safety Council's (NSC) 87<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress and Expo in New Orleans.

Rinefort was among those present for an awards ceremony honoring the 1999 NSC's Distinguished Service to Safety Award recipients. Robert Bates, chair of Eastern's health studies department, was among this year's awardees.

Rinefort, who retired from Eastern in 1997 and is now an international health and safety consultant, has been attending NSC annual meetings for more than 40 years and continues to remain active in the health and safety field. His honors include the NSC's Cameron Award for Service.

His expertise in cost effective safety management has been sought after by the federal government, state governmental agencies and private organizations and

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professional associations. Outside of the United States, he has worked closely with governments, firms and associations in Western and Eastern Europe, the Scandinavian countries, China and the former Soviet Union.

Rinefort said he has shared his research on workplace safety and health with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration which has based its Voluntary Protection Program initiative on some of his research results. Rinefort's more than 10 years of research concludes that a subtle combination of safety program activities, lower employee turnover and sufficient first-line supervision are necessary for employers to most cost-effectively reduce and control their work injuries.

He has authored two books and two book chapters and more than 80 publications dealing with health and safety issues. Most recently, he co-authored an article, "Occupational Health and Safety in Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States," which will appear in the February issue of *Business and Society Review*. The article explores occupational health and safety trends in the U.S., Germany, Japan, People's Republic of China and the former Soviet Union.

Rinefort said data shows that the former Soviet Union has the highest rate of work fatalities per 100,000 workers among the five great national powers, yet its rates for lost workdays and lost workday injuries is abnormally low. There are several factors that contribute to this disparity, Rinefort said. Most evident is systematic underreporting utilized by the Soviets which provided the appearance of a workers' paradise depriving

them of the critical political and economic voice to improve their health and safety conditions. "People lower in the institutional hierarchy were and still are generally reluctant to bring occupational health and safety problems to the attention of their superiors," he said.

Rinefort and co-author Joseph A. Petrick, associate professor of management at Wright State University, suggest several means for improving occupational safety and health conditions in the former Soviet Union, including providing incentives for employers to take occupational health and safety seriously, enforcing laws that protect emerging entrepreneurs and workers' health and safety and assuring that employees who do productive work will get paid what they are owed without having to incur unnecessary work risks.

Rinefort currently serves as president of Foster C. Rinefort and Associates, Inc., and the Russian American Foundation, Inc. He is a member of the NSC, Academy of Management and American Society of Safety Engineers. He is listed in *Who's Who in the Safety Profession*, *Who's Who in the Midwest* and *International Who's Who of Professionals*.

He holds a doctorate in business administration from Texas A & M University, a masters in business administration degree from California State University and a bachelor's degree in history and business administration from Grinnell College.