McHenry, IL — Six Moldavian leaders participating in the Open World Program visited the Small Business Development Center at the McHenry County College today. The visit was part of their 10-day mission in Northern Illinois examining ways to enhance the development of the private sector in the U.S. Managed by the independent Open World Leadership Center at the Library of Congress, Open World is designed to enhance understanding and capabilities for cooperation between the United States and the countries of Eurasia and the Baltic States by developing a network of leaders in the region who have gained significant, firsthand exposure to America’s democratic, accountable government and free-market system.

While in Illinois, the delegates visited several businesses, including agricultural projects and farms, the Illinois Institute of Technology, University of Illinois Extension Services, McHenry Community College and various government departments and discussed with professionals, gaining new understanding of strategies to enhance the private sector.

At ISBDC, Ms. Mary Margaret Maule described for the delegates various services of the college in supporting entrepreneurship and small business and thus promoting the private sector. Discussion and exchange of ideas focused on strategies and practical steps to facilitate an environment conducive to developing businesses. Commenting on the experience the delegation representative suggested the visit was of great value as they saw how an educational institution offers hands-on-skills and know-how in entrepreneurship. The delegates also expressed the desire and possibility to return to McHenry College for more in depth study of the working of a community college and more specifically the services for businesses.

The U.S. Congress established Open World in 1999 to enhance understanding and capabilities for cooperation between the United States and Russia. In 2003, Congress made all post-Soviet states eligible for the program. Thanks to Open World, some 14,000 current and future Eurasian leaders have experienced American civil society and have been exposed to new ideas and practices that they can adapt for use in their own work. Open World also promotes partnerships and continued communications between delegates and their American hosts and professional counterparts. Open World currently operates exchanges for political and civic leaders from Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan.

For more information on the visit by this delegation from Moldova or other services CIP Chicago offers, contact Dr. George Palamattam, Executive Director of CIP Chicago at 630 359 3393, gp@cipchicago.org. Information on the Moldovan delegates visit may also be obtained from Maura Shelden, Open World Public Affairs Officer at 202-707-6197. For more information on Open World, please visit http://www.openworld.gov.

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