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Volume 2, Issue 18



# The River's Edge

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**Important Dates**

**November 8-12**

- **In-House Registration Campus Connect**

**November 10**

- **ASSET Test 5:00 p.m. Continuing Ed. Bldg.**

**November 15**

- **Open Registration**

**November 19**

- **LETA Graduation**

**November 23**

- **ASSET Test 8:00 a.m. Continuing Ed. Bldg.**

**December 16**

- **Graduation 7:00 p.m. RCDC**

## RN Program Moves One Step Closer

Action at the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board meeting October 22 means students at BRTC and five other two-year colleges are one step closer to being able to attain RN degrees at their respective institutions. The AHECB unanimously approved a proposal from a consortium of six colleges, including BRTC, to offer the Associate of Applied Science in Nursing via distance technology. The consortium also includes Arkansas State University-Newport, Cossatot Community College of the University of Arkansas, Ozarka College, South Arkansas Community College and the U of A Community College at Morrilton.

Vice President for Academics Jack McCord said the proposal moved through without controversy. He anticipates similar smooth pas-

proval" at that time, the six member colleges may begin accepting applications for the January, 2005 semester. Each institution may enroll up to ten students.

Successful applicants will earn degrees in a three-semester, twelve-month format. Classes are to be delivered Tuesday and Thursday evenings via interactive video and online, and clinicals will be scheduled on weekends.

McCord said the new degree is a major step for BRTC and the consortium, and will be a very positive step toward helping to address a statewide shortage of RNs. He expressed

appreciation to those at the college who have worked diligently to make  
cont'd on page 2



Ramonda Housh, BRTC Nursing Director, reviews RN guidelines with, from left, Sandra Greene, Tara Miller and Judy Forrester, BRTC nursing instructors.

sage when the proposal is reviewed November 16 by the Arkansas State Board of Nursing. If the RN degree program is granted "Initial Ap-

## Student Awarded STAR Scholarship to Teach Math

Sandy Wilson of Powhatan is the first BRTC student to receive the state's new scholarship designed to recruit future Arkansas teachers. The STAR (State Teacher Assistance Resource Program) award will provide her a \$3,000 per year scholarship, worth up to \$9,000 over the course of her studies. Wilson received the funding assistance based on her agreement to pursue licensure

to teach math in an Arkansas school district.

The program, launched by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) in August of this year, provides the scholarships to Arkansas college students or adults wishing to change careers who are interesting in becoming teachers and will commit to teaching in designated shortage areas and/or in areas



Sandy Wilson

of the state with critical teacher shortages. Math is one of the critical subject areas in which a shortage exists. Others are science, special education or foreign languages.

Wilson is one of 264 students  
cont'd on page 2

# Dickinson is CJI's First Graduate

Through coursework completed at the Criminal Justice Institute (CJI) and BRTC, Marmaduke native Rick Dickinson successfully completed an Associate of Applied Science degree in Law Enforcement Administration, making him the first Arkansas enforcement officer to graduate from the new program.

Dickson has worked for the Arkansas State Police for more than 28 years in numerous positions, including Highway Patrol Trooper, Public Information Officer, Training Officer, and Investigator for the Criminal

Investigation Division. He also has been named "Top Gun," having won an ASP statewide combat shooting competition. Dickinson currently serves as the Company Commander for Criminal Investigation Division Company "F," headquartered in Jonesboro.

Previously, Dickinson earned a degree in Criminal Justice from BRTC, and is also a graduate of the CJI's School of Law Enforcement Supervision.

In September of last year, the CJI

began partnering with two-year and four-year institutions of higher education in Arkansas to offer certificate and degree programs in crime scene investigation and law enforcement administration. Both programs of study are available to Arkansas law enforcement personnel who are actively employed within a criminal justice organization in the state.

Completion requires that participants take special courses through the CJI along with general education courses from participating colleges and universities. For more information,



Rick Dickinson

contact BRTC's Law Enforcement department (870-248-4000), or the CJI (501-570-8000).

# Breast Health is Topic of Lunch-N-Learn

Sue Ramsey, RN, Instructor of Nursing at BRTC, presented information on "Breast Health" to a group of female faculty and staff at the October Lunch-N-Learn session in the Randolph County Development Center. The topic was chosen to coincide with National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, which raises awareness of breast cancer issues and the importance of early detection.

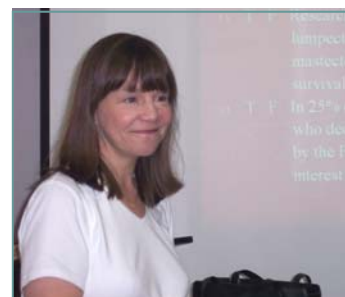
Ramsey distributed handouts regarding breast self-examinations

and shared a model for the purpose of demonstration. She stressed the importance of self-exams, which should be performed on a monthly basis, for the early detection of breast cancer – the most common cancer among women.

Mammograms are also very important for early detection. It is recommended that women age 20 to 39 have a mammogram every three years and then every year beginning at age 40, yet 13 million U.S. women

40 years of age or older have never had a mammogram.

Each year, 182,000 women are diagnosed with breast cancer and 43,000 die, according to the National Breast Cancer Foundation. Ramsey explained how curable breast cancer can be if caught early. She stressed it is essential for women to perform regular self-examinations and schedule routine mammograms.



Sue Ramsey

# Nursing

Continued from page 1

this event possible.

In addition to McCord, those attending the AHECB meeting in Jonesboro were BRTC President Richard Gaines, VP for Finance Loretta Williams, Technical Division Chair Angie Caldwell, Nursing Director Ramonda Housh, and Director

of Institutional Advancement Dr. Jan Ziegler.

Those who would like more information on the anticipated RN program at BRTC may contact Dana Clay, secretary for the nursing program, at 870-248-4000, EXT 4150.

# Star Scholarship

Continued from page 1

statewide approved to receive the STAR scholarship. She will complete her Associate of Arts degree at BRTC in December, and then plans to transfer to Williams Baptist College to complete her BSE in mathematics degree.

For students who agree to pursue teacher licensure in one of the critical subject areas and agree to teach in a geographic critical shortage area, the STAR scholarship can bring \$6,000 annually for up to three years, for a total of \$18,000. If the recipient fails to attend college full time or chooses not to teach in the subject area or geographic area as agreed upon, the funding converts to a fully

payable "loan."

ADHE will forgive one year of the \$3,000 loan for each consecutive year the recipient teaches full time in an Arkansas public school in a designated subject or geographical critical shortage area (or forgiveness of the \$6,000 loan for each consecutive year the recipient teaches in a designated subject area and geographical shortage area).

Interested students may contact the Financial Aid office at BRTC (870-248-4000) for more information, or may contact ADHE directly at 501-371-2050 or 800-54-STUDY for an application.

Would you like to receive The River's Edge online via e-mail rather than snail mail? If so, please let us know by sending an e-mail to [dina.hufstedler@blackrivertech.org](mailto:dina.hufstedler@blackrivertech.org). Please be assured that your e-mail address will not be distributed to others.

# Jonesboro Students Find a Niche at BRTC



Katrina Henry and Kentra Ford

Katrina Henry and Kentra Ford, both of whom now live in Jonesboro, drive twice a week to their classes on the Pocahontas campus. The two cousins, along with their respective sisters, Ebony Ford and Kanaka Henry, commute Tuesdays and Thursdays. They drive to a town and

institution of higher education in which, they admit, the initial thought of being part of such a miniscule ethnic minority group was more than a bit intimidating.

Their worries have thus far proven groundless.

“I love it here,” says Katrina. “I thought I was gonna’ be scared. I didn’t really think I’d fit in,” she explained. “But I’ve not run into one rude person. Everyone has been so nice.”

It is an experience shared by her

cousin, 2004 Jonesboro High School graduate Kentra. “At first I was going to ASU,” she says. “I was all signed up and everything, but ASU was just too big for me. I’m not ready for ASU. Yet.”

“I like the way I can get online responses really quick,” Katrina adds, in reference to her Microsoft 2000 and U.S. History to 1876 courses. The cousins combine traditional class enrollment with online classes, meaning the commute is less difficult to schedule. “My online instructors get back with me in just a matter of hours, not days,” she noted.

Both Kentra and Katrina are taking college basics and plan to complete their Associate of Arts degrees before transferring to a four-year institution. Katrina plans to pursue a BSE degree in elementary education, while Kentra has not yet decided on a major field of study. And both say the lower price of attending BRTC, along with the added benefit of one-on-one assistance, were major factors in their

decisions. Katrina learned of BRTC from her sister Kanaka, also a BRTC student, and the interest sort of spread through the family.

Like most commuters, they have calculated the drive to the minute: “Seven-ten for an eight o’clock; seven for a seven forty-five, and we don’t speed,” Katrina says. The numbers refer to the time they must leave Jonesboro to make their early morning classes, which begin at 7:45 a.m. Tuesdays (Science Lab) and 8 a.m. Thursdays. All four have coordinated their schedules so that, unless they stay over to do library work, they can be back in Jonesboro around 1 p.m., in plenty of time for their part-time jobs. Kentra works at K-Mart, while Katrina is a substitute teacher at Blytheville on her “off” class days.

And both are busy poring over the Spring 2005 schedules, hoping and planning to again take to the road while traveling toward their educational goals.

The commute between Pocahontas and Jonesboro has long been a commonplace occurrence. The exact number of those past and present making the forty-mile drive to study or work in Jonesboro is unknown, but surely substantial. The road runs both ways, however, and now several BRTC students make the commute in reverse—driving from Jonesboro to Pocahontas. At least two of them say they have found a welcome niche in the small college and small town atmosphere here.

Former Blytheville residents

# Week 10 of LETA Involves Traffic Stop/Bias Based Training

Students in the Law Enforcement Training Academy class at Black River Technical College participated in a Professional Traffic Stops/Bias Based Policing course as part of their required training. This course is designed to educate and train students to understand perceived racial bias in policing issues such as racial profiling complaints. Strengthening the citizen and police partnership is also a goal of the course.

Volunteers consisting of BRTC students and staff played the role of suspects being pursued by the officers. LETA students were presented with simulated real-life situations in an effort to train them on appropriate

actions and responses to different stimulus.

Students in the 2004-B LETA class are nearing completion of the 13-week Basic Police Training course, and graduation for the class

is scheduled for Friday, November 19, at 11:00 a.m. in the Randolph County Development Center on the campus of BRTC.



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## Mission Statement

*Black River Technical College is an institution of higher learning committed to a partnership with the individual and the global community to provide lifelong learning experiences, seeking always to empower those it serves to achieve their academic, vocational, and personal development goals.*

*The River's Edge is produced by the Office of Institutional Advancement.*

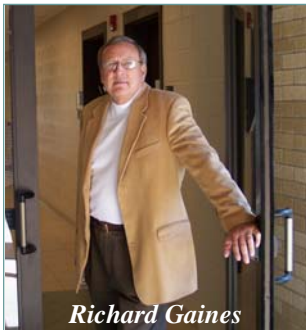
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## From the President's Desk



*Richard Gaines*

The role of community colleges is the subject of an interesting article in the October 29 issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. The title of the article explains the thrust of the article: "2-Year Colleges Face an Identity Crisis." Here's how the article sums up the situation of colleges like ours: "The institutions—part liberal arts colleges, part occupational-training grounds, with more than a dash of remedial education and a pinch of general-equivalency-diploma preparation thrown in—are widely misunderstood. As politi-

cians try to pump the institutions' job-training components while hordes of high-school graduates—shut out of four-year institutions by rising academic standards and cramped capacity—flock to their open doors, the identity and stature of the nation's 1,200 community and technical colleges have perhaps never been more in flux."

The article, which makes many valid points, reminds me once again of just how vital is the two-year college in the overall education picture. Two articles in this week's issue of *The River's Edge* prove the point even further: BRTC and other two-year colleges around the state are filling an important role in helping to remedy worker shortages in two of society's most crucial professions—registered nurses and public school teachers in specific subject and/or geographic areas. In many instances, it is the two-year college that provides the gate through which

## New Cashier in Bookstore

Julie Hendrix of Walnut Ridge has joined the staff as the new cashier in the BRTC bookstore on the Pocahontas campus. A graduate of Walnut Ridge High School, Hendrix earned a clerical certificate from BRTC in 1979. She worked at Skil in Walnut Ridge for 23 years prior to joining the BRTC staff.

The addition of Hendrix will allow the bookstore to better serve BRTC students, said VP for Finance, Loretta Williams.

"Everyone is really nice and I love the fact that this job is so close to home," comments Hendrix. She would like to pursue an Associate of



*Julie Hendrix*

Applied Science degree while working at BRTC and plans to begin taking classes in January.

Hendrix has two children - Will, 15 and Natalie, 13 - who attend school at Hoxie.

students gain access to these and so many other professions.

Here at BRTC, I like to think we do not suffer to great extent from an "identity crisis" as mentioned in the *Chronicle*. Admittedly, we continue to work to make people in our service area counties aware of the wide

range of educational programs we offer, including the first two years of a baccalaureate degree and many one-year and two-year technical degrees. But we know exactly who we are and what we are about. We are a *community college*, with emphasis on *community*.