



# The River's Edge

Inside this issue:

*Spring Enrollment Cont'd* 2  
*Technical Programs Cont'd* 2  
*Black History Month* 2  
*MLK Day Observed* 3  
*PTK Blood Drive* 3  
*Single Parent Scholarship* 3  
*Chris Dobbins* 3  
*From the President's Desk* 4  
*Equine Clinic* 4

## Spring Enrollment Numbers Announced



The official spring enrollment at BRTC is 1681, announced Vice President for Student Services Mike Sullens. This figure represents a slight drop from last spring's number of 1744 students, but the news is not necessarily bad. This decline may actually reflect an improving economic picture, college officials suggested. Typically, college enrollment climbs in times of economic downturns, and declines in times of economic upswings. The Spring 2004 number also reflects a decline of 155

students from the record Fall 2003 enrollment of 1836, but historically colleges see a dip in the spring enrollment over that of the previous fall semester, Sullens noted.

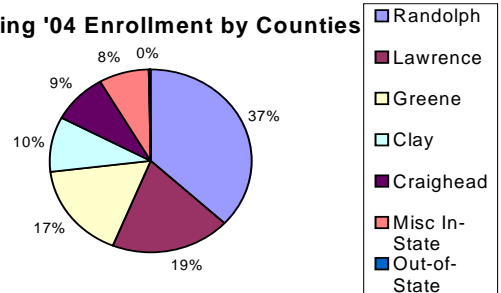
The eleventh-day enrollment snapshot shows that the majority of BRTC's students are females (62.3 percent) and are enrolled as full-time students (59.7 percent). Sullens also announced that the majority of BRTC's student body are considered

"non-traditional" (56.2 percent) since they are age 25 and over.

More than one-third of the students are residents of Randolph County, while nearly 20 percent live in Lawrence County. Greene County is home to some 17 percent, while approximately 10 percent live in Clay County. Craighead County makes up for about 9 percent of the student body, while another 8 percent reside

*cont'd on page 2*

Spring '04 Enrollment by Counties



### Important Dates

March 8

- Advisory Dinner

March 10

- ECHO—RCDC

April 3

- ACT Test

April 9

- Law Enforcement Graduation

April 13, 14, 15

- Rising Junior Exams

April 15

- Success 2004

April 29 - 30

- Higher Ed Board Meeting at BRTC

## Technical Growth is Model for Other Colleges



Representatives from Ouachita Technical College in Malvern traveled to Pocahontas Friday of last week to learn about BRTC's Carl Perkins grant program and to view components of BRTC's recruitment program for technical education.

Technical enrollment trends at BRTC reflect substantial growth in the number of technical students and in the overall percentage of technical students over a five-year period. The program in place at BRTC has been cited by Dr.

Gene Aist, Coordinator of Academic Programs at Arkansas Department of Higher Education, as a model for other colleges to consider in efforts to increase their own technical student enrollments.

Dr. Susan Karr, Vice President for

Academics at OTC, along with Ouachita's Applied Science Department Chair, and a faculty member from OTC met with Dr. Jan Ziegler, Director of Institutional Advancement and Carl Perkins Coordinator, Joniece Trammel, Perkins Recruiter, Ann DeClerk, Director of Marketing and Public Relations, and Dina Hufstedler, Institutional Advancement Secretary. Also attending the meeting was David Bowlin.

A five-year enrollment cycle shows that the number of students enrolled in BRTC's technical programs stood at 825 in the Fall 2003 semester,

*cont'd on page 2*

## Enrollment Cont'd from Pg. 1

in other counties or out of state.

In spite of lower overall numbers, administrators have identified at least two positive trends in the enrollment picture. The newly initiated Weekend College on the Paragould campus is off to a good start, according to Vice President for Academics Jack McCord. Three class sections in this new initiative have "made," McCord

announced. The classes are Computer Concepts, Freshman English I, and Introduction to Algebra. In addition, two Saturday classes on the Pochahontas campus attracted sufficient enrollments to "make": Introduction to Psychology and Writing Fundamentals.

Also a positive trend for BRTC is an all-time record enrollment at the

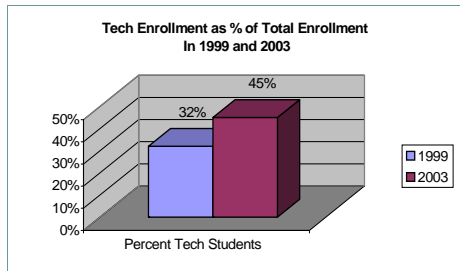
Paragould campus for Spring 2004. A total of 303 students are enrolled in credit classes at BRTC/Paragould. Sullens and McCord attributed the growth in part to enhanced services BRTC provides in Paragould. The changes are brought about by the presence of a full-time site coordinator, coupled with increased provision student support services, including academic and financial aid

advisement.

Sullens and McCord acknowledged in particular the efforts of Site Coordinator Joan Linnstaedter, Greene County Industrial Training Center Director Vicki Kuykendall and staff, along with BRTC's Financial Aid Director Carolyn Collins and Academic Advisor Kim Bigger.

## Technical Programs Cont'd from Pg. 1

compared to 402 technical students in Fall 1999. This increase represents



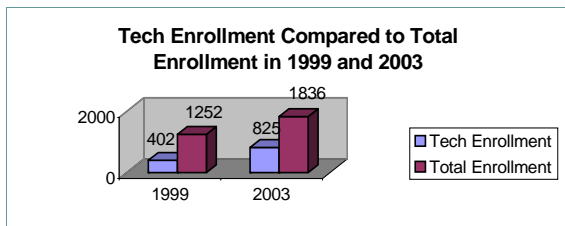
college has had in place a Perkins Recruiter, a post formerly held by Kim Bigger.

DeClerk explained to the visitors the college's billboard campaign, now entering its fourth year. She presented information to enable OTC to mount its own campaign in an attempt to raise

an overall higher percentage of technical students at BRTC: 45 % of the total enrollment in 2003 compared to 32% in 1999.

While many factors combine to account for the growth, the high exposure afforded the technical programs through the Carl Perkins grant program seems to have played a role in the upswing, believes Aist.

Trammel presented an overview of her activities as Perkins Recruiter.



awareness and enhance the image of that institution's technical programs. During the first phase, DeClerk noted, BRTC featured various former students in the workplace with the caption, "Thanks to BRTC, I have work to do." The second phase of boards, which will appear later this spring, portray a transforming student/graduate, with focus on the theme "Start to finish....it's a great

investment." "We know that much of the increase in our technical enrollment can be tied to other factors," said Ziegler. "However, the commitment of BRTC to technical education as reflected in the decision to dedicate Perkins resources to showcase the

programs through the billboards, and to reach out to prospective students through the recruiter's activities....all of these seem to be factors in the growth," she noted. "As a community college, we strongly believe in meeting all the educational needs of this area. For some students that means accessibility to the first two years toward the baccalaureate degree; for many students that means the accessibility to a one-year certificate or associate's degree in one of our high quality technical programs leading them directly into the job market. We think we do both things really well."

programs through the billboards, and to reach out to prospective students through the recruiter's activities....all of these seem to be factors in the growth," she noted. "As a community college, we strongly believe in meeting all the educational needs of this area. For some students that means accessibility to the first two years toward the baccalaureate degree; for many students that means the accessibility to a one-year certificate or associate's degree in one of our high quality technical programs leading them directly into the job market. We think we do both things really well."

## Black History Month Events Announced

The second annual Black History Celebration set to coincide with Black History Month will feature a variety of educational and cultural activities, and gets underway February 2 at the Eddie Mae Herron Center in Pochahontas. This year's observance is co-sponsored by the Eddie Mae Herron Center and BRTC's Department of Continuing Education.

Week One, beginning February 2, includes quilting and storytelling, featuring the "Freedom Quilt," which provided information to runaway

slaves in the Underground Railroad. During Week Two, visitors can observe and participate in demonstrations of making butter, cutting up and frying chicken, and making molasses cake. The third week features demonstrations of grinding corn into meal and making Ho'Cakes.

Hog Killing and butchering will be highlighted on Saturday, February 21, and will include a lunch of beans and cornbread. Also on this day, a vintage 1993 Oldsmobile '98 will be auctioned, with proceeds supporting the Eddie Mae Herron Center and Museum.

The fourth week's activities include demonstrations of the nearly forgotten art of "String Quilting," along with the art of braiding hair. An exhibit on "Emerging Black Leaders" will be on display throughout the month.

The month-long observance culminates with a community potluck Friday, February 27, featuring Arkansas Appellate Judge Wendell Griffen in a presentation on "African American Heritage and its place in America's History." Judge Griffen is a candidate for Chief Justice of the Arkansas Supreme Court, and, if elected, would be the first African American to hold the post.

All events are held at the Eddie Mae Herron Center at 1708 Archer

Street in Pochahontas, and are open to the public. Student groups are especially invited to schedule a trip by phoning 892-4661, 892-3843, or 892-3165.



## MLK Day Observed



Classes visit Eddie Mae Herron Center

Mr. Gary Buxton and Dr. Jason Morrison, instructors of English and Social Sciences at Black River Technical College, invited classes to the Eddie Mae Herron Center open house on Monday. The center was open all day in observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday.

Pat Johnson, Center Director, gave the students a tour of the center, explaining artifacts in the school building where she once attended.

Johnson introduced students to her fellow classmates who shared firsthand accounts of their experiences during the days of segregation.

Morrison says, "Visiting historical sites of this nature provides students with an understanding of the power that one man has to change society."

After Buxton's students enjoyed refreshments, they concluded their tour with a sit-down discussion on "What this day means to you."

## PTK Blood Drive

A blood drive sponsored by the BRTC chapter of Phi Theta Kappa was held on the Pocahontas campus January 19. Approximately twenty-five pints of blood were donated, which is a lower amount than usual for the PTK Blood Drives.

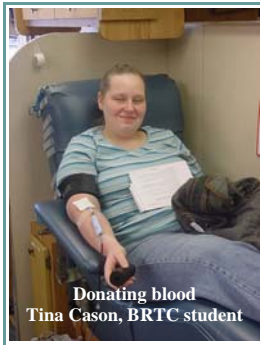
"The low turnout might be attributed to the Martin Luther King, Jr.

Holiday and the cold weather," states

Ruth Schaa, Business Instructor and Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Advisor. Other advisors are Dr. Linda Moss, Phillip Dickson, and Gary Buxton.

PTK is an international honor society for two-year colleges. BRTC members participate in many community service activities including blood drives, a food

drive, and the "adopt-a-highway" program. Typically, three to four blood drives are held on the Pocahontas campus throughout the year.



Donating blood Tina Cason, BRTC student

## Single Parent Scholarship Fundraiser

Kay Ellis, Business Instructor and Chair for the Mary Sallee Single

Parent Scholarship Fund, is currently selling chances to win a seafood or steak dinner for two at the Walnut Ridge Country Club. The winner of the dinner and a guest will be able to dine at the club anytime in February or March on a Friday night for a seafood dinner or any Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, or Saturday night for a steak dinner.

## Mid-Life Challenge Becomes Exciting Opportunity

Chris Dobbins is 47 years old. He lost his job working as a draftsman and office manager with an engineering firm in Jonesboro last July. The situation which occurred after an ownership change was sobering, to say the least. But when he looks up from the dented fender he is busy repairing, the smile on his face says it all. Dobbins will receive his one-year certificate in Auto Collision Repair in May.

"I wish I'd done this a long time ago," he says. "It's coming easy to me—this is the first time I ever made 'A's in school. And I'm a lot happier doing this than I was in my other job."

He is completing formal training in something that had always interested him. Dobbins said he had always worked on his children's cars, as well as his own. Interestingly, both his sons have attended BRTC. One of them had earned a certificate in Networking, and the second one is currently enrolled at the college to prepare for a career in teaching. It was through them he became aware of the program's availability. After three weeks of joblessness, he decided to apply to the high-demand program.

Fortunately, Dobbins explained, he was eligible for six months of unemployment benefits while attending college, since his program of study was on the official "high demand" list. "That really helped," he added. "Without it, it would have been a lot tougher to make good grades, if I had had to have a job besides going to school." Since his wife, Nancy Dobbins, is employed, he will be able to finish out the entire year even after the benefits cease, he said.



Chris Dobbins

Dobbins' goal in this endeavor is simple: "I want to learn it well, and then find employment in the industry." He has no desire to own his own

business, having seen the "headaches" of small business owners.

In spite of the drive to Pocahontas five days a week, Dobbins said the entire experience has been "great all around. I enjoy being around the younger students. You sort of see yourself in them," he noted. As for others considering mid-life career changes and re-tooling or re-training, Dobbins has this advice: "Go for it!"

Tickets are \$1.00 each or six tickets for \$5.00 and proceeds from the fundraiser will go to the Single Parent Scholarship Fund at BRTC.

Anyone who would like to purchase a ticket or would like more information should contact Kay Ellis at 870-248-4000, ext. 4165 or e-mail her at kaye@blackrivertech.org. The last day

to purchase a ticket is February 11.



Kay Ellis

# Black River Technical College

P.O. Box 468  
1410 Hwy 304 East  
Pocahontas, AR 72455  
Phone: 870-248-4000  
Fax: 870-248-4100  
Website: [www.blackrivertech.org](http://www.blackrivertech.org)

P.O. Box 1565  
2402 North 12th Avenue  
Paragould, AR 72450  
Phone: 870-239-0969  
Fax: 870-239-2050

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

[janz@blackrivertech.org](mailto:janz@blackrivertech.org)  
[annd@blackrivertech.org](mailto:annd@blackrivertech.org)  
[dina.hufstedler@blackrivertech.org](mailto:dina.hufstedler@blackrivertech.org)



## 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.*

### On-line Application address:

<http://connect.blackrivertech.org/nappadm.html>

## From the President's Desk



*Richard Gaines*

When this institution, along with the other vocational technical schools around the state, became a two-year college in 1991, one of the major concerns of many people, including me, was that the technical programs would suffer. There was a genuine worry that the new colleges would place such emphasis on General Education, or college transfer track, that enrollment in technical degree

programs might decline and eventually vanish. In some instances around the state, this, unfortunately, has occurred.

Our community needs training and educational opportunities for everyone, and that includes not only college courses for transfer to a four-year institution, but also top quality technical programs designed to prepare people directly for the labor market. We know that in fact, many jobs in the technical sector offer extremely attractive salaries.

That's why we are especially pleased with the growth in enrollment in our technical programs in this institution. Our overall student enrollment for the semester just completed reflected a student body made up of 45% technical students. These are students seeking two-year degrees in one of our ten AAS degree programs, or those working toward one-year certificates or certificates of proficiency in our 17 programs of study.

Just five years ago, the percentage of technical students was only 32% of our total enrollment.

Like other colleges, we did experience some programs where low enrollment necessitated closure. But in the past few years we have made a concerted effort to target and promote technical education, and we may be seeing positive results. While the reasons for our healthy technical enrollment are varied and complex, we are extremely pleased that several of our established programs are now operating at capacity, and have waiting lists of future students. This is good news for this college and good news for this community.



## Equine Clinic



*John A. Burt*

The Continuing Education and Business Outreach Department at Black River Technical College recently held an Equine Clinic. Over one hundred individuals attended the Saturday clinic held on the campus of BRTC. John A. Burt, who operates a Farrier Service, taught the clinic. Burt has twenty-five years of experience working in the equine market. This free-of-charge clinic covered topics such as: Feet, Growth & Care, Shoeing, Education of Proper Shoeing and Trimming Correctly, and the Cost of Owning a Farrier Service.