

June 21, 2004

Volume 2, Issue 11



# The River's Edge

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## RN Degree Passes Major Hurdle



Angie Caldwell, Business & Technical Division Chair, Jack McCord, VP for Academics, and Paula Lewis, LPN Director.

A proposed new RN program in which BRTC is a partner received an overwhelming "yes" vote from the

Arkansas State Board of Nursing at a June 10 meeting in Little Rock. The 11-0 vote gave "Prerequisite Approval" for a transition RN program to be offered at six two-year colleges, including BRTC of Pocahontas/Paragould. The vote paves the way for the six-member consortium to seek approval of the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) at its quarterly meeting in August. This vote was considered the crucial one, according to BRTC's Vice President for Academics Jack McCord.

The plan calls for the Arkansas

Rural Nursing Education Consortium to offer a transition for certified Practical Nurses (LPN/LPTN) to Registered Nurses. Tentative plans call for each institution in the consortium to enroll up to ten students in this degree program. Students will earn degrees in a three-semester, twelve-month format. Classes will be delivered by interactive video and online, and clinicals will be scheduled evenings (after 3 p.m.), nights, and on weekends.

Pending approval by AHECB, the colleges in the consortium may begin

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### Important Dates

**June 21-25**

- Kids College Paragould

**July 1**

- Board of Trustees Meeting

**July 5**

- Offices Closed in Observance of Independence Day

**July 6**

- Summer II Classes Begin

**July 15**

- Priority Deadline for Filing Financial Aid for Fall

**August 13**

- Foundation Board Meeting

**August 20**

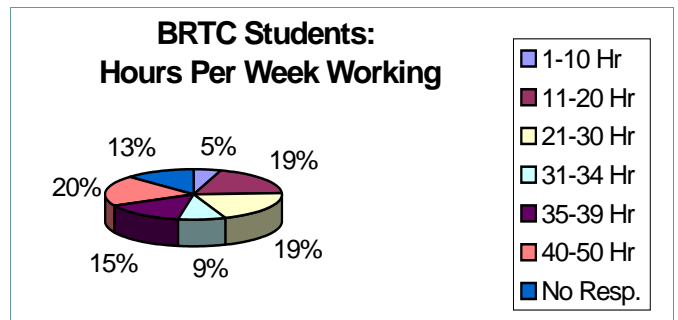
- Nursing Students Return

**August 23**

- Fall Classes Begin

## BRTC Students Share Likenesses, Differences With Two-Year Students Nationwide

A survey of BRTC students comparing them with students at two-year colleges nationwide points out that local students have much in common with their counterparts all over the country, but they do differ in a few significant ways. The ACT survey, "Faces of the Future," was administered locally by the Office of Institutional Advancement to a balanced sampling of about 500 BRTC students at the end of the Fall 2003 semester. Among the survey items were students' financial situation, employment trends while studying, access to technology at home, work and college, primary obstacles they must overcome, educational levels of their parents, the top reasons for



selecting their respective colleges, and overall satisfaction with their college experience. The complete survey results were presented by Director of Institutional Advancement Dr. Jan Ziegler at the annual spring administrative retreat.

Over 61 percent of students surveyed list their annual income at less than \$15,000, a figure corroborated

by data from the office of Financial Aid showing that some 70 percent of BRTC students receive some form of assistance to fund their college education. Nationally, about 57 percent list this income range. While BRTC faculty and staff have long been aware that many students must work to supplement and or fund their

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# Globalization Is Focus of Meeting

In 2003, fifteen percent of the state's gross state product involved export goods, according to Ray Riggs, International Trade Specialist from Little Rock. That means that potentially, according to the U. S. Department of Commerce representative, fifteen percent of the state's jobs are linked to international trade.

Riggs was on the campus of BRTC June 9 to discuss issues and possibilities for linking local businesses and manufacturers and their products or services with international consumers.

The meeting included representatives of BRTC, Pocahontas area businesses, and Chamber of Commerce Directors Wayne Gearhart of Pocahontas and Ted Moskal of Walnut Ridge. A follow-up to the globalization forum held in April at the college, the event was organized by Gearhart. Riggs encouraged local leaders to consider ways to promote

awareness of the potential for exporting products and explained the services the federal agency can offer.

"We link the producer with the customer," Riggs said. Most of the services available through his office are free, and those that do involve charges—those performed in other countries, primarily—are typically drastically less expensive than when purchased through a private consultant.

Although many Arkansas businesses are already involved in exporting, far more of them are not, often because they simply do not know how: they do not understand the possibilities, or they fear the unknown, or they assume the barriers

are insurmountable, Riggs noted.

The Northwest Arkansas region is currently leading the state in export business, according to Riggs. The Walton, Tyson, and Hunt enterprises are major factors,

along with an entrepreneurial spirit, or a "can-do" attitude, he explained. Still, several Northeast Arkansas businesses are involved in exports, and Riggs' office would like to see that participation expand in Eastern Arkansas.

Further meetings and activities to cultivate interest and provide assistance locally are being planned by BRTC and the area Chambers of Commerce.



Ray Riggs addresses audience



Julie Radcliff

## Radcliff Joins BRTC

Julie Radcliff of Stokes recently joined the staff of BRTC as the new accountant, replacing Patti VanCamp who will be leaving in August.

Radcliff is a 1997 graduate of Maynard High School and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Corporate Finance from Arkansas State University in May 2001.

Before she began her duties in May, Radcliff worked the past three years as controller for Northern Technologies in Pocahontas.

# BRTC Students Share Likenesses

education, that awareness now is more complete with the survey's results indicating that 56 percent of BRTC students surveyed work either part- or full-time, while close to 44 percent of BRTC students surveyed work more than 30 hours per week. Of the total survey respondents, about 20 percent indicate they work from 40-50 hours per week.

Given the income levels of BRTC students, their ranking of problems encountered while attending college would also seem obvious. Five of the top seven problems are funding-related: personal financial problems, family responsibilities, cost of computer, job-related responsibilities, cost of child care, cost of books/materials, cost of transportation.

Of special importance was the survey segment indicating that technologically speaking, BRTC students - almost 75 percent - have extensive e-mail and web access at

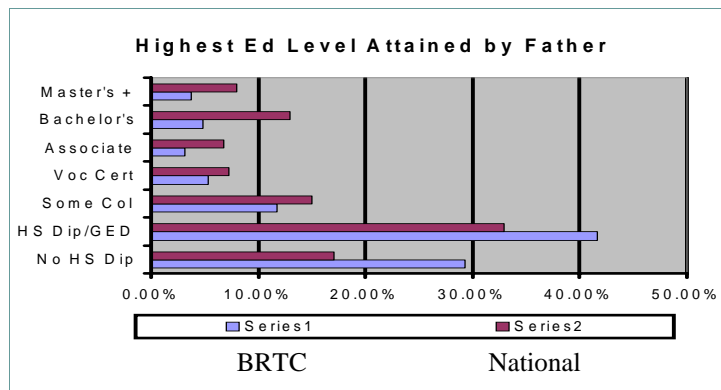
home. Nationally, that percentage is only some five percent higher. Student web access at college is nearly ten percent higher at BRTC than for other two-year college students na-

Also of great interest is the survey result showing the extremely low educational attainment of parents of BRTC students. According to the survey results, almost 30 percent of

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fathers and 15 percent of the mothers have either a two-year college degree or higher. Locally, these figures are all the more striking when compared with national averages.

"Surveys such as this one are valuable," points out Dr. Ziegler, "because they can confirm things we already considered to be the case, and help us to know to what degree these facts are the case. They can also tell us things about our students we did not realize or had not considered." The "Faces of the Future" survey is valuable, too, because it places BRTC students in the national context, pointing out where local students resemble or where they differ from other two-year college students. Such surveys help to provide the basis for decisions or initiatives the college may make, Dr. Ziegler added, and they substantiate the college's efforts to seek grants or other sources of revenue.



tionwide, but web access at work is almost ten percent lower for BRTC students than their counterparts.

Significant for BRTC staff also is the indication that a substantial percentage of students surveyed-42 percent-would likely enroll in online classes in the future.

the fathers of BRTC students and about 20 percent of the mothers do not have a high school diploma. Approximately 40 percent of both mothers and fathers of BRTC students have attained no higher education beyond a high school diploma or GED. About eight percent of the

# Kids College Is Great Fun—and Educational Too!

The calendar may say school's out, but the time says "Kids College" at BRTC-Pocahontas/Paragould. This fun, learning, and activity-filled week brought a total of 93 youngsters last week to the Pocahontas campus with a similar number expected this week at the Paragould campus. Activities at the Pocahontas campus encompassed everything from Creative Cooking to Beginning Fishing, from Cyber Space to the Middle Ages, from Arkansas Wildlife to Fire/Tornado Safety, from Health and "Stamping up Fun" to "In the News" and "Web of Life." BRTC-Paragould's Kids College will include activities on "Math Madness," Creative Writing and Creative Arts, Aerobics/Fitness, Food and Electrical Safety, "Science is FUN!" and "Fun-n-Games."

Kids College is an annual event provided by the Department of Continuing Education and Business Outreach. Coordinator of the department at the Pocahontas campus, Patti Blaxton, expressed her enthusiasm at the event's continued success. "Each year we keep getting better, and each year we find the slots totally fill up," she said. "This wouldn't be possible without the many volunteers who teach the

classes and help with the students, and the many donors who help with snacks and T-shirts and materials."

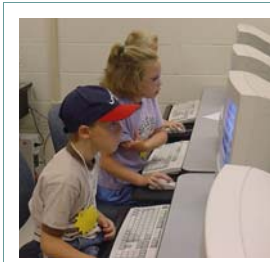
Paragould's Coordinator Vicki Kuykendall echoed the words of thanks, saying "Our



corporate sponsors and volunteers make all the difference. They always come through for us and for the Greene County Industrial Training Center."

Blaxton expressed appreciation to the following instructors who volunteered their time: Mike Andrews, Candy Futrell, and Debbie Turner – all from Randolph County Coopera-

tive Extension Service; Jenni Reed, Randolph County Library; Kristyn Rainey, Old Davidsonville State



Park; Scott Baltz, Pocahontas Fire Department; Dalton Sullivan, Pocahontas Star Herald; and Charles Long, Arkansas Game and Fish.

BRTC faculty/staff members who participated included Tara Miller, Linda

Moss, Jasa Haney-Hollis, Norma Ashburn, Rene Davis and Dana Clay. Other teaching participants were Pat Reynolds and Gena Farrin of Pocahontas and Randy Brinkly from Arkansas

Department of Economic Development.

In addition, volunteers who helped with the activities included Martha Teester, Dorothy Rapert, Millie Thielemier, Kay McDonald, Pat Lambert and Emmy Lambert - all from the Pocahontas Women's Club;

and C. J. Johnson, Rhonda Foster, Pam Smith, Pat Miller, and Sharon Miller - all from the Randolph County Medical Center; and Nettie Blaxton.

Businesses whose donations benefited the Pocahontas Kids College were American State Bank, Wal-Mart, Tom's Foods, Turner Dairy, Coca-Cola Bottling, Pepsi Americas, and Watco.

Scheduled to teach/facilitate the activities at Paragould are Daphne Perkins, Teddi Anderson, Kandice Oglesby, Kerri Reddick, Amy Busby, Whitney Poe, Michah Jaggers, and speakers from Greene County Extension Service. Guest speakers will include Chuck Long of Arkansas Wildlife, Nita Bowden, representatives of the Fire Department, K-9 and DARE Programs, and Brian Bastel of City Light Water and Cable (CLWC).

Monetary donations in support of BRTC-Paragould's event have been made by CLWC, Wellsco Graphics, ARI of Paragould, ARI of Marquette, Emerson Electric, Bill Rogers of Jonesboro, Daphne Perkins, BRTC Instructor, 2220 Kid's Place, LLC of Jonesboro, Personal Therapy, PLC of Jonesboro, American State Bank of Paragould, and Amy Adams of CLWC.

## RN Degree

advertising during the fall semester for students. The next step after AHECB approval will be for the consortium to hire a program director, McCord explained. When curricular and other administrative decisions have been made, the consortium will then seek "Initial Approval" from the Arkansas State Board of Nursing. Pending approval at this step, the consortium may admit students and begin the program in January 2005. The consortium will then proceed toward "Full Ap-

proval" from the same Board.

Member institutions in addition to BRTC are University of Arkansas Community College, Morrilton; Cossatot Community College of the U of A, DeQueen; Arkansas State University-Newport; Ozarka College, Melbourne; and South Arkansas Community College, Eldorado.

Because there is currently a moratorium on new RN programs, McCord added, the Board had to vote to lift the moratorium for this

pilot project.

McCord expressed his elation at the approval and at the level of support provided by key individuals. McCord specifically cited Senator Paul Miller of Melbourne, State Representatives Jody Mahoney of Eldorado, Tommy Dickinson of Newport, and Paul Weaver of Violet Hill, as well as several hospital administrators, and Debra Vassar, Director of Nurses of Arkansas Methodist at Paragould. McCord, along with

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BRTC's Nursing Director Paula Lewis and Division Chair Angie Caldwell were present at the meeting.

He also acknowledged the efforts of BRTC staff members, particularly Lewis, under whose guidance the participation of BRTC was planned and crafted. "I know Paula, as the director of our nursing department, has worked tirelessly on this RN transition program, and I can't say enough about how we appreciate all she has done."

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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.*

### On-line Application address:

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

## From the President's Desk



The news that the Arkansas State Board of Nursing has given the first step of approval toward the development of a new RN program is good news for BRTC, and welcome news for the entire state. I greatly appreciate the work of those on this campus and of our colleagues at other colleges who have worked for several months to help make the RN degree program a reality.

This new program, a transition from Practical Nurse to Registered Nurse, if given final approval at the various steps as required in the com-

ing months, will serve a well-documented need in Arkansas. That it will be accomplished through a consortium of six two-year colleges working together and sharing precious resources makes this program all the more exciting. Even though the number each member college can enroll is limited to ten per institution per cycle, this degree program, if approved at the next steps in the process, will help to ease the current shortage of registered nurses throughout the state.

Technology will play a major part in this new program. Classes will be delivered to all the participating students via distance education, primarily in the form of compressed video. The equipment to support receiving and transmitting by compressed video is an additional expense, and other pieces of equipment will be necessary to train students to be RNs. But the sharing of a program director and instructors still makes this a

much more affordable way to offer this type of program than if each college were responsible for the full program costs. I hope this sort of cooperative arrangement can serve as a model for other programs here and

around the state as all of us work to make the most efficient possible use of educational dollars.

**Summer II Classes  
Begin July 6**

### Golf Tournament Fundraising Now in Full Swing

The BRTC Foundation reviews pledges made for the First Community Bank/BRTC Foundation Golf Tournament scheduled for Saturday, October 2, at Rolling Hills Country Club. FCB is the overall tournament sponsor and has donated for the second year \$10,000 for the event. Additional pledges of hole sponsorships have already raised an additional \$4,000. Tournament organizers have set this year's goal at \$25,000. All proceeds benefit the BRTC Foundation and will help to fund student scholarships. A four-star sponsorship provides a banner, team entry fee, and golf cart, and costs \$500; three-star sponsorships provide a sign, and cost \$250; two-star sponsorships also provide a sign, and cost \$125; one-star sponsorships provide name recognition and cost \$50. More information is available by contacting Jim Ulmer, Vickie French, or Ann DeClerk at 870-248-4000.

