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The River's Edge

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BRTC Receives Preservation Grant

A grant awarded Black River Technical College last month will allow for the research and planning phase of what local officials hope will be the eventual restoration of two historic structures in Randolph County. The two structures, known as the Rice-Upshaw House and the Looney-French House, are among the state's oldest.

The \$194,000 grant was awarded by Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources Council in Little Rock. Funding for the grant is provided through the real estate

logs from the Rice-Upshaw House were cut in about 1826, with construction believed to be in 1828, making it the oldest standing structure of its kind in Arkansas. The Looney-French House has been documented as being only slightly "younger," constructed in about 1833. This structure is believed to have been originally a tavern or inn, making it also the oldest such structure in the state.



Pictured, from left, are Jack French, Christina French, Dorothy Jean Upshaw, Dr. Jan Ziegler, VP for Development, and BRTC President Richard Gaines. They are shown with a sign designating the role of the ANCRC in the project. The French and Upshaw Families donated the two houses to BRTC for preservation.

The houses are located about a mile apart on opposite sides of the Eleven Point

River near Dalton. The houses have remained in the

Dendrochronology, or "tree-ring dating," indicates the

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Important Dates

- May 30 - June 29
Summer Session I
- June 6
ASSET Test
- June 12 - 15
Kids' College
- June 20
ASSET Test
- July 5 - August 3
Summer Session II
- July 11
ASSET Test
- July 13
Foundation Board Meeting
- July 25
ASSET Test
- August 21
Classes Begin

"Big Givers" Help Fill the Shelves



Looking at donations are front, from left, Vickie French, Sandy Baltz, and Angie Caldwell, and back, from left, Jack McCord, Debbie Prichard, and Erma Ulmer.

A surprisingly large number of the books on the shelves in the BRTC Library are there as a result of the generous giving of BRTC employees, according to BRTC Librarian Erma Ulmer. "There are 32 current employees or departments that have donated a total of 374 books as memorials or contributions," she noted. "I believe this number is significant and I appreciate the generosity of spirit and the contributions to the library collection."

Vickie French, Administrative Assistant to the President, has donated a total of 99 books making

her the top giver. Next is Debbie Prichard, Business Department Head, with 56 donations. Angie Caldwell, Division Chair of Business and Technology, and Jack McCord, VP for Academics, each donated 28 books, followed by Sandy Baltz with 27.

Ulmer also gave thanks to those who have donated books from their personal collections in addition to the new books given through memorials and honorariums.

Community members who wish to give a book as a memorial or honorarium may do so by contacting Ulmer at 870-248-4061.

BRTC Welcomes Evans to Staff

Rita Evans has joined the Black River Technical College staff as Data Entry Specialist in the Department of Student Services.

Evans moved to Pocahontas from Pocahontas, Tennessee, in September when her husband Nat assumed the position of preacher at Pyburn Street Church of Christ. She is a graduate of Riverside High School in Parsons,

Tennessee, and has attended Freed-Hardeman University and Jackson State Community College.

Evans previously worked for six and a half years at Freed-Hardeman University as Perkins Loan Accounts Coordinator and Loan Collection Officer. She and her husband have three sons and six grandchildren.



Rita Evans

BRTC Kids' College June 12 - 15, 2006

Grades 1-3 8:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.
Grades 4-6 1:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m.

Sponsored by:
BRTC
Continuing Education Department

Students Accept Scholarships



Austin Abbott

Financial Aid Officer Brandi Chester has announced that an additional group of students has accepted scholarships to attend BRTC in the Fall 2006 semester. This group brings to 38 the total number of scholarships awarded to date. Additional awards

will be made, according to Chester.

“It is not too late for students who scored 24 or higher on the ACT or who rank in the top ten percent of the 2006 graduating class to apply. They may do this through August 15.”

Those accepting scholarships funded by the BRTC Foundation include Corning graduates Steven Smith and April Yandell; Sloan-Hendrix graduate Tabitha Young; Hoxie graduate Brent Garner; and Oak Ridge Central graduate James Hufstедler. These scholarships provide full tuition for one year.

Also providing one year's tuition are the President's Scholarships awarded to Kathleen Whitlock of Pocahontas; Austin Abbott of Hoxie; Kayleigh Wilson of Corning; Suzanna Hefner of Strawberry; and Stacey Brown of Paragould.

These privately funded scholarships have been awarded: Eddie Mae Herron Scholarship to Cynthia Giryotas of Paragould; First Community Bank Scholarship to Hope Cox of Jonesboro; and Jo Larsen Memorial Scholarship to Callie Pounds.

Steven Smith is the son of Becky Bailey of Corning and Paul Smith of Pocahontas. He plans to study Electricity/Electronics at BRTC. The daughter of William and Brenda Yandell, April plans to take college basics and then transfer to a four-year college and become a math teacher. Tabitha Young plans to major in preschool education, and

eventually operate a daycare center. Her parents are Curtis and Melissa Young. The son of Thomas and Shirley Hufstедler, James Hufstедler plans to major in Automotive Service Technology.

The son of Charles and Chris Garner of Sedgwick, Brent Garner plans to major in Auto Service Technology at BRTC. Married to David Whitlock, Kathleen Whitlock plans to obtain her RN degree at BRTC. The son of Larry and Jeannie Abbott, Austin Abbott hopes to work in the field of video game design and to major in Networking at BRTC. Kayleigh Wilson plans to complete basics at BRTC, and then to transfer to a university to complete her bachelor's degree and major in Pre-Dentistry. She is the daughter of Jerry and Ursula Wilson. Suzanna Hefner, daughter of Mike and Deanna Hefner, plans to major in Criminal Justice at BRTC and then to pursue a career as a game warden. The daughter of Larry and Barbara Cox, Stacey Brown plans to major in Dietetics.

Cynthia Giryotas is the daughter of Jerry and Barbara Davidson. She plans to major in Business. The daughter of Tommy and Jackie Cox, Hope Cox plans to complete college basics at BRTC and then transfer to a four-year college. Callie Pounds, daughter of Robert and Susan Pounds, plans to pursue a career in the field of Early Childhood Education.



Suzanna Hefner



Steven Smith



Stacey Brown



Cynthia Giryotas



Kathleen Whitlock



Hope Cox



James Hufstедler



Kayleigh Wilson



Brent Garner



Callie Pounds



April Yandell



Tabitha Young

Preservation Grant

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ownership of descendants of the original interrelated settler families of William Looney and Reuben Rice since their construction. The homes' owners, Dorothy Jean Upshaw and Jack and Christina French, have donated the structures to BRTC in order to gain eligibility for grant funding to preserve and restore the historic structures.



Rice-Upshaw Home

The grant will be used for development of a master plan to outline specific architectural work as well as



Looney-French Home

the long-range community use of the facilities, according to Dr. Jan Ziegler. In addition, the grant in-

cludes funding for immediate stabilization of the structures to prevent further deterioration until the actual restoration work can begin. Other elements of this phase of the grant are for further historical and architectural study to learn more about the structures and the families and enslaved people who built them, as well as other structures or outbuildings that may have completed the farmsteads.

The actual level of restoration and the specific use for the structures will be determined during the process of developing the master plan over the next twelve months, Ziegler explained. "This process will involve work by a preservation architect and historical consultant, along with more archaeological research. We'll also seek extensive public input through a series of public meetings," she added.

"We anticipate that these struc-

tures will serve in some capacity as an agricultural and historical educational center," Ziegler said. "Their preservation will serve as the perfect vehicle for us to study and uncover elements of early Arkansas history, something of interest not just locally, but to a much wider audience."

"We are so pleased the families

had the vision to work with us to help preserve these valuable pieces of our heritage," said BRTC President Richard Gaines. "We understand this is a lengthy process, but we are extremely hopeful that we can seek continued funding support to see this through to eventual restoration of the structures."



Photos from 2003 Early Arkansas Settlement Study Conducted by Joan Gould



BRTC-Paragould Hosts Recognition Ceremony

The Paragould Campus of Black River Technical College hosted an Electrical Apprenticeship Recognition Ceremony on May 16. "We are very proud of all our apprentices who continue to show dedication to completing the program," said Jacinda Welch, Dept. of Continuing Education and Business Outreach.

Buddy Fletcher, Grant Pitcher and Jaime Valencia completed the minimum required hours of classroom instruction and on-the-job training (OJT), and are now eligible to apply for their state journeyman exam. According to Welch, several industries acknowledged their accomplishment with special gifts to

help them in their chosen industry.

"We would like to thank Terry Ryan with Klein Tools, Dennis White with Arkansas Industrial Electric Supply, and Mark Brinkley with Mid-South Plumbing & Electrical for all the support they have shown," Welch stated. "We would also like to thank Dr. John Bibb with Bibb Chiropractic Center for a great class project."

The electrical apprenticeship program at BRTC-Paragould runs yearly from August through May. Anyone interested in more information about the program may contact Welch by calling 870-239-0969 Ext. 104.



Pictured, from left, are Jamie Valencia, Buddy Fletcher, Grant Pitcher, Dennis Gregory (instructor), Dennis White, Mark Brinkley, Terry Ryan and Dr. John Bibb. They participated in Black River Technical College's Electrical Apprenticeship Recognition Ceremony on the Paragould campus. BRTC - Paragould offers a wide range of training programs for Greene County Business and Industry, in addition to an extensive curriculum of General Education (College Transfer) courses.

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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



We all know in a general sense that prosperity is linked to education. Basically, the greater the educational attainment of a community or state, the more likely that community or state will be economically strong. A recent report, "American Higher Education: How Does It Measure Up for the 21st Century?", provides interesting insight on the importance of higher education for our nation's future economic health. The report looks at several findings of another important report, *Measuring Up 2004*, and concludes that institutions

of higher education do well in some areas, but less so in others.

The four indicators the report addresses are preparation, participation, completion and affordability, and whether the nation has improved in these areas over the past decade.

There have been "some real gains" in college preparation, according to the report, though these gains are uneven. In spite of improvements in the number of high school students taking college prep curricula, a large percentage of young people still do not take a curriculum that prepares them for college.

In the area of participation, closely tied to the concept of access to higher education, the answer is surprising and troubling. Some states have improved on access measures, but overall in the nation, "smaller proportions of young people and working-age adults are enrolling in education and training beyond

Registration Summer II June 26 - July 5

Classes Begin July 5

high school today than a decade ago."

Modest gains have been made on the indicator of completion rates, especially in the technical certification programs. This does not surprise us here at BRTC, where technical education comprises close to half our student enrollment.

On the indicator of affordability, again the findings are not surprising, and not positive. The report concludes that "over the past decade, we have made it considerably more difficult for many families in this country to pay for college." The report cites several factors: state budget cuts, tuition increases (on average) that outpace inflation and

the family income, and a decreased share of financial aid funds "targeted" at low-income students.

What does all this mean for us here at BRTC and in the communities we serve? We must continue to work to carefully manage BRTC and its assets, even as we seek new sources of income to allow us to keep this college as affordable as possible. We must work with the public schools to ensure a natural progression from high school to college, and then to degree completion and, when appropriate, to progression into a four-year institution. These are not new ideas, but reports sometimes help us re-affirm the importance of what we do.