



The River's Edge

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Board of Trustees Tour New Technology Complex

With only a few construction items remaining to be completed, the new Business Technology Complex was host to its first official "visitors" Thursday when members of the BRTC Board of Trustees toured the 26,000 sq. ft. building. The facility will be ready when students arrive on campus on August 20, President Richard Gaines told the Board members, who wrapped up their quarterly meeting with the tour.



Joe Wessell, left, Dr. Rebecca Edwards, and Mike Dunn in tour of new facility.

The complex is located at the heart of the Pocahontas campus, and will house the college's large business technology program. In addition, the impressive facility includes a cutting-edge Conference Center, along with a new Student Lounge and Internet Café and coffee shop, a CVN

(compressed video) classroom, lecture halls, classrooms, and faculty offices. Several of the spaces have been designated for formal naming opportunities to recognize the financial support of organizations, businesses and individuals.

"We have worked long and hard to make this building a reality, and we owe a great deal of thanks to our community partners, the City of Pocahontas, the Bank of Pocahontas, First National Bank of Walnut Ridge, and Steve Manley of Universal Asset Management, for their generous support of this project," said Gaines.

The complex connects to Randolph County Develop-

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Important Dates

- August 13**
Faculty/Staff In-service
- August 20**
Classes Begin
- August 29**
PTK Blood Drive
- September 7**
Serendipity
- October 6**
Golf Tournament
- October 24**
PTK Blood Drive

GED Graduation Celebrated



The Black River Technical College G.E.D. (General Education Diploma) graduation ceremony was held Thursday, July 19, in the Randolph County Development Center. According to Director of Adult Education Peggy Weir, 123 students from Clay, Lawrence, and Randolph Counties completed the G.E.D. program which ran July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007.

Including the graduates and the guests, approximately 150 people attended the ceremony.

Tom Baker, Director of Career Pathways, was the guest speaker. Adult Ed Instructor Cindy Robinett provided the welcome, and Weir, assisted by G.E.D. Examiner Tammie Lemmons, presented certificates.

Other Adult Ed faculty and staff are Sue Bentley at the Walnut Ridge site; Carolyn Jones at Corning and Rector; Karon Skaggs, Corning; Linda Wyss, Piggott; and Gail Dodd and Jean Wilson, who, along with Weir and Lemmons, are based at the main campus at BRTC.

Additional Faculty and Staff Positions Filled

The Office of Personnel at Black River Technical College has announced additional faculty and staff positions that have been filled in preparation for the 2007-2008 academic year.



Scott Casady

Scott Casady of Strawberry has been hired as Aviation Instructor. He earned his certificate in aviation from BRTC in 1992 and worked eight years for American Aviation, and most recently for PSA Airlines, a subsidiary of US Airways.



Kevin Molder

Harrisburg native Kevin Molder has been hired as a Law Enforcement instructor. He graduated from Oak Grove High School in North Little Rock and holds a BS degree in Psychology from Arkansas State University, and is work-

ing towards an MA in Criminal Justice. His law enforcement career began with the Harrisburg Police Department, and most recently he worked as Chief Deputy Sheriff for the Poinsett County Sheriff's Department.



Darendia Kersey

Darendia Kersey of Pocahontas will be teaching computer courses in her role as full-time business instructor. She joins BRTC after teaching business at Pocahontas High School. She also taught one year as adjunct instructor for BRTC, and one year of high school business in Essex, Missouri. She holds both BS and MS degrees in Education from Arkansas State University.



Jana Culp

Janna Culp has been hired as a full-time science instruc-

tor to teach Human Anatomy and Physiology, Biology, and Medical Transcription. She holds an AS in Radiologic Technology degree, a BS in Radiologic Science degree, and an MS in Vocational and Technical Administration degree, all from Arkansas State University. She is a graduate of Pocahontas High School and currently resides in Poplar Bluff. She previously taught at ASU and as an adjunct instructor for BRTC and Three Rivers Community College in Poplar Bluff.



Misty Bradley

Also new to the BRTC staff is Misty Bradley of Ravenden who has been hired as Financial Aid Officer in Student Services. She graduated from Pocahontas High School, and from Williams Baptist College in Walnut Ridge where she earned a BS in Business Administration degree.

Five Awarded Fall Scholarships

The announcement this week of an additional five students who have been awarded scholarships for the Fall 2008 semester brings to 42 the total number awarded to date, according to information from the Office of Financial Aid. The newest awards include four Academic Distinction scholarships and one Presidential Scholarship. All are for full tuition.

Academic Distinction awards are based on GPA or class rank. They are renewable and may be transferable if students meet certain criteria, said BRTC Financial Aid Officer Brandi Chester. Accepting these scholarships are Rebecca Cockrum, Destiny Wray, Alexis Ashlock and Jeremy Hoggard.



Rebecca Cockrum

A graduate of Maynard High School, Cockrum is the daughter of Roger and Rose Smith. She plans to major in Physical Therapy Assisting.



Destiny Wray

The daughter of Tom and Tonya Wray, Destiny Wray plans to complete the Associate of Arts degree at BRTC

before transferring to a university where she will study Social Work. She is a Greene County Tech graduate.



Alexis Ashlock

With plans to complete college basics and then study medicine, Ashlock is a graduate of Oak Ridge Central. She is the daughter of Dennis and Nina Ashlock.

A Pocahontas High School graduate, Hoggard plans to study engineering after completing college basics at BRTC. His parents are Stacy Hoggard and Dwaine Hoggard.

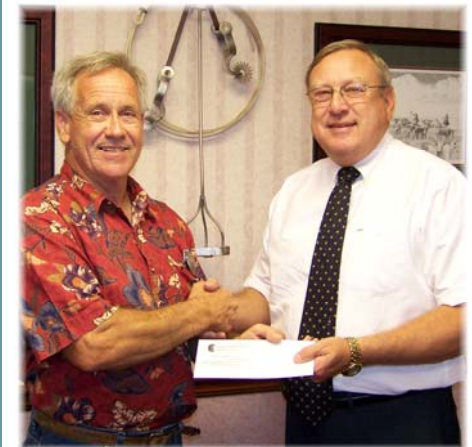


Jeremy Hoggard

Accepting a President's scholarship, Jessica Calhoun is the daughter of Wesley and Lisa Kelley of Imboden, and Robert Calhoun of Kansas. A Sloan-Hendrix graduate, she plans to study Physical Therapy after completing college basics.



Jessica Calhoun



Clay Co. Co-Op Presents Dividend

Clay County Electric Cooperative presented a check for over \$3,800 to BRTC last week as a part of the dividends paid to cooperative members. Presenting the check to BRTC President Richard Gaines was John Dalton, Chair of the Board of Directors of the cooperative.

The funds will be deposited in the colleges Maintenance and Operations Fund for general operations of the college.

Clay County Electric Cooperative is one of the seventeen electric distribution cooperatives in Arkansas.

Tuition Funding Available at BRTC

A significant amount of tuition funding is available for adults enrolled in or planning to enroll in one of BRTC's technical programs, according to the Office of Financial Aid and the Arkansas Workforce Center. Based on availability of funds, the Workforce funding would cover tuition and fees for adult students (age 18 and older) who meet certain income guidelines and who are enrolled in approved training programs.

Workforce Advisor Judith Blevens said the assistance is available in many instances even if the student has already been approved for a Pell grant. The program can fund "unmet needs" of students, including those who qualify for other types of assistance.

Recipients may receive the funding through completion of their certificate or two-year degree.

Students who are currently enrolled in one-year or two-year technical degree programs, as well as those prospective students who have not yet enrolled, may be eligible, Financial Aid Director Carolyn Collins said. "I strongly encourage those in both groups to contact us," she added.

"We really hope to award all the available funds," Blevens stressed. "Many of our previous students have graduated, leaving opportunities for a large number of new awardees."

Blevens is on the BRTC campus Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Currently enrolled students should see her during those hours or call 870-236-8220 to apply. Prospective students should contact Carolyn Collins (870-248-4000, EXT 4020) immediately to file for Financial Aid and to begin the process of determining eligibility.

FEMA Trailer Donated for Project REACH



"FEMA Trailer" is delivered to future restoration site.

BRTC has received a new "FEMA trailer" for use in Project REACH, announced VP for Finance Loretta Williams. The 14 by 64-ft. trailer was delivered last week to the Rice House location. The trailer was shipped from Selma, Alabama, and will be used to provide office and meeting space during the construction and restoration phase of the project.

"Basically, state agencies were notified by Arkansas Federal Surplus Properties of the availability of new FEMA trailers, and we knew we would be needing a facility of some sort to serve as a makeshift office while contractors and others are on-site during the coming year," Williams explained. "We applied, and were pleased when they notified us we would be receiving one."

The trailer came at no cost to the college, other than shipping.

The Rice House, donated to the college by Jean Upshaw and her family, has been confirmed by dendrochronology to be the oldest documented log structure still standing in the state. It was constructed in 1828 by pioneering settler Reuben Rice. The college has received a grant for \$575,000 from Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resource Council to restore the house to its near-original state, with an 1836 interpretation date.

Project REACH includes plans also to seek funding for restoration of the Looney Tavern/Inn, located about a mile from the Rice House. This structure, donated to the college by Jack and Christina French and family, has been confirmed with an 1833 construction date. It was built by a kinsman of Rice, William Looney, and

his enslaved African Americans, who migrated to the Eleven Point River Valley as early as 1803.

The college is working to develop an educational center in conjunction with the restoration of the historic structures.

"We are planning now for BRTC faculty and students to have opportunity to use this project as a springboard for a wide range of educational activities," said Dr. Jan Ziegler, VP for Development. "Not only will students have a chance to learn more about our heritage, but they will also be able to apply some of the skills they are learning in an authentic activity while doing so," she added. "Whether art or writing or history or photography or PowerPoint presentations, the work of faculty and students can have connection to the project. I believe the possibilities are endless—and we are counting on our instructors to develop wonderful ideas that will enrich the educational experience of BRTC students." The educational activities will eventually expand from the BRTC community into other educational settings for students of all ages, according to Ziegler.

Register Now!

Fall Classes

Begin August 20

Black River Technical College

P.O. Box 468

1410 Hwy 304 East

Pocahontas, AR 72455

P.O. Box 1565

2402 North 12th Avenue

Paragould, AR 72450

Phone: 870-248-4000

Phone: 870-239-0969

Fax: 870-248-4100

Fax: 870-239-2050

Website: www.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.

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

janz@blackrivertech.org

annf@blackrivertech.org

dina.hufstедler@blackrivertech.org



On-line Application address:

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

From the President's Desk



Richard Gaines

As we gear up for the start of another fall semester here at BRTC, it seems appropriate to take note of recently released reports that show Arkansas overall still lags far behind the rest of the nation in the rate of adults who have completed a baccalaureate degree. At only 19%, our state ranks next to last in that category, and this is a statistic that affects us all.

That same report also indicates that the state's two-year colleges have shown remarkable growth in

the past ten years in the number of degrees and certificates awarded. BRTC is a part of that growth, and we hope this trend continues.

Closely aligned with the concern for increasing the number of college graduates in Arkansas is the issue of completion and retention. Like all institutions of higher education, we, too, are looking at this situation and seeking ways to improve the likelihood that, once enrolled, the student persists until his or her educational goals are reached.

As an institution whose students are all considered "commuters," we are particularly interested in ways to create a system that will respond to the needs of those students. One recent study from the National Clearinghouse for Commuter Students has identified what it terms "myths" about today's college commuter population. These myths bear consideration, and are certainly food for thought:

Myth 1) If commuter students wanted to be real college students, they would get more involved on campus. Myth 2) It is impossible to reach commuter students, since they spend so little time on campus. Myth 3) One office can adequately address the needs of commuter students. Myth 4) Commuter students are less committed to and less engaged in their education.

We will be looking at these and other pre-formed but not necessarily accurate ideas we all have about the nature of our student body in the coming year to consider ways we here at BRTC can take every step possible to assist our students on their way to that certificate or degree, or even completion of that individual course. If they succeed, we all succeed.

Tour (Continued from Page 1)

ment Center, and can be entered from the campus interior or from a parking lot on the east side of the building. A formal dedication, open house and official naming ceremony will be scheduled for later this fall. The approximate \$4 million in construction and other costs for the new facility was funded through bond revenues and college reserves, in addition to support from the community.

In the regular Board business, Gaines also updated trustees on plans to renovate a recently acquired space for the Automotive complex, and on the upcoming construction plan for an academic complex at the BRTC-Paragould campus.

The Board also heard reports from BRTC Vice Presidents Dr. Michael Sul-lens, Jack McCord, Loretta Williams and Dr. Jan Ziegler. Action items included the approval of the 2007-08 Catalog, Policies and Procedures Manual updates, FY 08 promotional items appropriation and funds transfer, and approval of the FY 06 Audit, which was without findings, and filed with the Legislative Joint Auditing Committee.