



Inside this issue:

<i>Students Selected for Scholarships</i>	2
<i>REACH Artifacts Focus of Study</i>	2
<i>Financial Aid 'Passing the Torch' (Cont'd from Page 1)</i>	3
<i>Summer I Enrollment "Up 50."</i>	3
<i>Departmental Awards Presented to Twenty</i>	3
<i>From the President's Desk</i>	4
<i>Clay County Electric Gives Capital Credit Refund</i>	4
<i>Ingram Joins BRTC Maintenance Staff</i>	4

# Dedication Ceremony Honors Martins

The children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Joe Martin were on hand at Black River Technical College June 4 for the formal dedication of a water feature given by Martin in memory of his wife and their grandmother, the late Joann B. Martin. The fountain, a bronze tableau, is located near the entry of the Administration Building.

BRTC President Richard Gaines, speaking at the dedication ceremony, acknowledged the commitment of Joe Martin as the first Board of Trustees Chair and as a longtime advocate and supporter of many BRTC-related efforts since the beginning of then-Black River Vo-Tech in 1973. He spoke also of Martin's personal friendship during the ceremony, with the Martin family members and BRTC staff members gathered for the occasion.

Current Board Chair Mike Dunn noted that it was

Martin who introduced to him the possibility of serving as a member of the BRTC Board. Dunn also spoke fondly of the late Joann B. Martin as "BRTC's 'First Lady,'" given her husband's active role in college affairs.



Skip Martin, son of Joe Martin, acknowledged the comments and the gestures of the college in honoring his parents, including the naming of the "Joe Martin Health Sciences" Building. He confirmed his father's love of the institution, noting that even before there was a physical campus, the initial planning and operations of what would become BRVTS

occurred in the Pocahontas Federal financial institution owned by Joe Martin.

Family members received a framed memorial piece to commemorate the occasion. Martin, who currently lives in Jonesboro, was unable to attend.

## Important Dates

- June 12  
*ASSET Test*
- June 24  
*ASSET Test*
- July 1  
*Summer II Classes Begin*
- July 22  
*Fall Orientation Paragould*
- July 23  
*Fall Orientation Pocahontas*

# Financial Aid 'Passing the Torch'



Brandi Chester and Carolyn Collins

When students arrive on the BRTC campus at Pocahontas this fall, a familiar face in a key position will be missing. Carolyn Collins, who has served as Director of Financial Aid since 2000, has retired from full-time work, and will be replaced by Brandi Chester, named last week as the new Financial Aid Director. Prior to heading up the Office of Financial Aid, Collins held positions as Division Chair for Technical Education during the mid-1990s, and as a faculty member in the Business department from 1990 to 1995.

A 36-year veteran of public education, 18 of which she spent in higher education, Collins has been witness to BRTC's phenomenal growth on several fronts: student headcount, facilities, staffing, and financial aid. "BRTC was not yet a college when I came," she said. "All but a few of the programs and academic areas were staffed by a single faculty member, and most of us were in one of only three or

(Continued on page 3)

## Students Selected for Scholarships



*Kristi Rush*

Additional scholarships for the 2008 Fall semester have been announced by the Office of Financial Aid at BRTC. These include six Academic Scholarships and one President's Scholarship, bringing to 39 the total number of awards made to date.

A President's Scholarship has been awarded to Kristi Rush of Walnut Ridge. She is working on an AAS degree in Business Administration, with plans to eventually complete a Bachelor's degree in Business.

Receiving Academic Distinction scholarships are Amber Steveson, Ashley Durham, Seth Johnson, Jody Wade, Charles Kimble and Lukas



*Amber Steveson*

Hamlin. Based on academic test scores or rank in the top ten percent of the student's graduating class, these scholarships carry full tuition and are renewable with the maintenance of required academic progress.

The daughter of Steve and Twana Steveson, Amber Steveson is a graduate of Sloan-Hendrix High School. Her major area of study is undecided.

PHS graduate Ashley Durham plans to complete an Associate of Applied Science in Business Technology degree. She is the daughter of Mark and Jeanette Durham.

The son of Ronda Johnson, Seth



*Ashley Durham*



*Seth Johnson*

Johnson plans to take college basics at BRTC. His graduated from Poca-hontas High School.

Jody Wade is the daughter of the late Penny and Ivan Wade. A Hillcrest High School graduate, she plans to complete college basics at BRTC and transfer to a university where she will major in Math Education.

Maynard High School graduate Charles Kimble plans to complete basics at BRTC, and then transfer to a four-year university and major in Education. He would like to teach Math and Science at the Middle School level. His parents are Willie



*Jody Wade*



*Charles Kimble*



*Lukas Hamlin*

and Cindy Kimble.

The son of Rebecca Sluder and Phil Hamlin, Lukas Hamlin is a Ravenden Springs resident who was home-schooled. He plans to complete basics at BRTC, and then transfer to a four-year school and major in Biology, with emphasis on Genetics.

Students may continue to apply for the Academic Distinction Scholarship and other awards through the college's website

([www.blackrivertech.edu](http://www.blackrivertech.edu)) or by contacting Financial Aid Director Brandi Chester at 870-248-4000 EXT 4021 through the start of the fall semester, August 18.

## REACH Artifacts Focus of Study

Historic items associated with Project REACH are currently a focus of study and documentation on the campus of Black River Technical Campus. Ronnie Walker of Lake Village is working to complete detailed drawings and descriptions of a loom and spinning wheel which previously belonged to the Reuben Rice family.

REACH (Researching Early Arkansas Cultural Heritage) is the project to restore two historic log structures in the Eleven Point River Valley. One of the structures, the Rice House, has been documented as the oldest identified structure of its type known in Arkansas, with a construction date of 1828. Restoration on this structure will begin within a few weeks. The second structure, the Looney Tavern, was constructed in 1833, and is also slated for restoration in 2009. Both

structures were donated to the college for preservation by surviving family members of the respective houses.

Restoration and related archeological, architectural and historical research are being funded by grants from the Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resource Council.

The loom Walker is documenting is believed to have arrived on the 1812 wagon train which brought

interrelated members of the Rice and Looney families from their homes in Hawkins County, Tennessee to present-day Randolph County.



*Ronnie Walker, a specialist in historic preservation, shows a piece of the loom to BRTC Board Chair Mike Dunn.*

Described as a "hanging beater loom," the massive piece, disassembled, was stored in the attic of the Rice House

until its removal earlier this year in preparation for the restoration work. Meticulous documentation and drawings are crucial elements to eventual conservation and restoration of the loom. In addition to his careful

examination and cataloging of the hundreds of parts, Walker is looking also for indications or evidence that will lead to greater understanding of the loom's history—as well as the culture of those who made and used the piece during its 200-year history.

A Poca-hontas native, Walker has spent several years working as construction superintendent at the Lakeport Plantation project in southeast Arkansas. A longtime carpenter and history buff, Walker holds an AAS degree in Historic Preservation Trades.

**Spring Break 2009**

**International Tour**

**Egypt**

**Contact Dr. Jan Ziegler**

# Financial Aid ‘Passing the Torch’ (Continued from Page 1)

four buildings. That made it easy for the staff to be close to each other. And as for financial aid [since she assumed those duties eight years ago], the growth there is unbelievable, partly because of our student growth, but partly because of economic conditions in the communities we serve.”

Collins said that Pell monies awarded in those eight years has increased from around \$1 million to \$3 million for the 2007-08 academic year. Loan volume in that same time frame has jumped from roughly one-quarter million to its current \$2.2 million. “When I came into this office,” she explained, “about 56% of our degree-seeking students had financial aid eligibility. Today, the

number of degree-seeking students eligible for financial aid is over 80%.” Much of that fact can be accounted for by the many plant closures in the BRTC counties of Clay, Randolph, Lawrence, and Greene. Many of those dislocated workers have enrolled at BRTC, and many have passed through the doors of the Financial Aid office and have spoken by phone or by email with Collins and other staff.

In her years of teaching, administrative, and financial aid work with these and other students, Collins said her professional philosophy is advice taken from a conference she attended many years ago: “Every decision we make should include the question, ‘How will this affect the students?’”

This contact and the opportunity to give assistance to the legions of students seeking Financial Aid have provided the job’s greatest personal rewards, according to Collins. She gives high praise to the entire Financial Aid staff, as well as to other BRTC faculty and staff with whom she has developed close relationships during the years. “Those—the students and the staff—are the things I will miss,” she said, then added, “though really I’ll still have the student contact to some extent.” Collins plans to return to BRTC part-time in the fall, but will be working at the Paragould campus. She said she looks forward to working at Paragould and being a part of BRTC’s growth and contributions to

that community, and, she admits, the plan allows for an easier “transition” into eventual full retirement.

As for her decision to make this major life change, Collins said she is very much “at peace” and will remain committed to BRTC and to the continued service and positive impact of the college. “I know Brandi will do an excellent job. This really is a wonderful place with wonderful people who work here.”

A colleague and former co-Division Chair with Collins, Dr. Jan Ziegler, VP for Development, would add Collins to that list of wonderful people. “I’d have to say that BRTC is a better place because of your having been here,” she told Collins as she prepared to leave for the final time.

## Summer I Enrollment “Up Substantially”



*Summer I students cross campus enroute to class.*

The number of students enrolled in Summer I at BRTC is “up substantially” from the same enrollment period for 2007, according to data released by the Office of Student Services. This year’s figure, 648, is an increase of approximately 12%

over last year’s number, and about 18% higher than the 2006 Summer I enrollment.

The enrollment includes 542, or 84% enrolled at the Pocahontas campus, and 106, or 16% enrolled at the BRTC/Paragould campus.

Counties of origin in approximate percentages are: Randolph, 36%; Lawrence, 19%; Greene, 17%; Craighead, 13%; Clay, 9%; and other

in-state or out-of-state students, 6%.

Registration for Summer II is currently underway. Preliminary numbers indicate another uptick from last year’s figures. Summer II classes will be held from July 1 through July 31.

## Departmental Awards Presented to Twenty

Twenty graduates were recognized during recent Commencement ceremonies as being the recipients of department awards for the May 2008 semester. VP for Academics President Jack McCord, assisted by BRTC Board of Trustees President Mike Dunn, presented the awards.

Award recipients in General Education departments included the following: Mantha Baltz, English; Scott Casady, Painting; Ashley King, Graphic Design; Kristen Hall, Math; Elizabeth Scales, Life Science; and Brittney Hancock, Natural Science; Ryan Baker, Criminal Justice; and

Cheryl Englert, Physical Education.

Receiving awards in technical programs of study were Darrin Hanley, Auto Body; Robert James, Auto Tech; Arvin Tucker, Aviation; Dorothy Copeland, Administrative Services; Sandra Harper, Business Administration; and Mary Kay Wagner and David Michael King, Networking.

Also, Benny Owens, Machine Shop; Travis Bonner and Jimmy Meeks, Welding; Kayla Harris, Practical Nursing; and Christy Johnston, Phlebotomy.

**Kids College**

**June 16 - 19**

**Continuing Education Building**

# Black River Technical College

P.O. Box 468  
1410 Hwy 304 East  
Pocahontas, AR 72455

P.O. Box 1565  
1 Black River Drive  
Paragould, AR 72450

Phone: 870-248-4000  
Fax: 870-248-4100  
Website: [www.blackrivertech.org](http://www.blackrivertech.org)

Phone: 870-239-0969  
Fax: 870-239-2050

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

[janz@blackrivertech.org](mailto:janz@blackrivertech.org)  
[annf@blackrivertech.org](mailto:annf@blackrivertech.org)  
[dina.hufstедler@blackrivertech.org](mailto:dina.hufstедler@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*

According to a recent article in a NACUBO (National Association of College and University Business Offices), a major trend reshaping the landscape of higher education is the "growth of digital and other nontraditional students." That organization defines nontraditional students as "those attending school online, part time, or at an advanced age," while to BRTC this typically refers simply to those age 25 or over. What is particularly interesting about this trend is the part dealing with the

"growth of digital students." This refers to the growing number of students coming out of our high schools with technology skills and preferences. The ways these young people interact and expect to learn, according to the article, have been shaped by "social networking Web sites, user-generated content, and sophisticated simulation games." This group of students, many of whom will no doubt choose online educational options, is expected to grow at a higher pace than those "other nontraditional students." The article suggests that "faculty will need institutional support to leverage new technology and to create learning products that offer applicability outside the classroom." Providing that support is a priority here. Technology upgrades and technology training through professional development will be a major focus in many of our programs during the coming year. This won't be the first time institutions of higher learning are, in a way, following the lead of our students.

## Clay County Electric Gives Capital Credit Refund

BRTC President Richard Gaines receives a check on behalf of BRTC from Clay County Electric District Manager James Johnson. The check in the amount of \$4,094.37 is a result from a capital credit in 1988 which is profit above the actual cost of doing business. The Clay County Board voted to return 100% of the profit for 1988.



## Ingram Joins BRTC Maintenance Staff

Trent Ingram of Pocahontas has been hired to work as Building Equipment Maintenance Repairman for BRTC's Pocahontas campus. A graduate of



*Trent Ingram*

Caruthersville, Missouri, High School, he received his welding certificate from Pemiscot County Vo-Tech and has been attending apprenticeship classes at BRTC through the Department of Adult Education.

He has worked the past three and a half years for Koons Plumbing in Pocahontas. He and his wife, Stacy, have two sons.