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Important Dates

- July 17
GED Graduation
- July 22
Fall Orientation Paragould
- July 23
Fall Orientation Pocahontas
- July 29
ASSET Test
- July 31
Foundation Board Meeting
- August 7
Board of Trustees Meeting
- August 18
Classes Begin

BRTC to Host Acclaimed Speakers



Edward E. Gordon

Marc Prensky

Two acclaimed speakers will visit BRTC this fall as a part of the college's professional development activities. The focus of the first presentation, scheduled at various times September 3-4, will be the role of education in workforce development, while the second presentation, October 28-29, will feature a workshop on "Teaching Digital Natives."

Edward E. Gordon, author of *The 2010 Meltdown: Solving the Impending Job Crisis*, is a recognized international expert on training, careers, and education related to business and economic development. His presentation will apply a multi-disciplinary approach to today's complex workforce and economic development issues.

"Outsourcing and relocation are bleeding away

American jobs overseas," Dr. Gordon writes. "Yet in the United States experienced tech workers are retiring, and new skilled people are in short supply." His presentation will explore some of the ways local communities can prepare for the future by equipping the current workforce and the next generation of workers with the skills required for the high-tech workplace.

Internationally acclaimed speaker, writer, educator, consultant and game designer Marc Prensky will address the "really big discontinuity" which has occurred in education. "Our students have changed radically," Prensky writes. "Today's students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach." He refers to today's students—K through college—as "Digital Natives," having grown up with digital technology, while "those of us who were not born into the digital world but have, at some later point in our lives, become fascinated by and adopted many or most aspects of the new technology are, and always will be compared to them as 'Digital Immigrants.'"

"We are extremely excited to be able to bring these two renowned individuals to Pocahontas and to BRTC," said Division Chair for Technical Education Angie Caldwell. Both speakers are being funded through a Carl Perkins grant. For more information, contact Caldwell (EXT 4120) or Dina Hufstedler, Project Specialist, (EXT 4187) at 870-248-4000.

Bids Opened for Paragould Expansion



VP for Finance Loretta Williams, lower right, and Architect A. C. Williams, oversee bid opening.

BRTC officials were pleased with the keen interest on the part of contractors who submitted bids for a 16,500 sq. ft. Academic Classroom expansion of the BRTC-Paragould campus. The bids, which were opened July 10, ranged from \$1,755,215 to \$2,327,500 for construction only. Asphalt for the road and parking lot was not included in the bid. Bids were taken under advisement and will be reviewed by the college's architect and administrators.

The project includes three classrooms, two computer labs, a

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Scholarships Awarded for Fall Semester

Four recent high school graduates have accepted scholarships for the Fall 2008 semester, according to Financial Aid Director Brandi Chester. They are Kelsey Shavalia, Houston Hancock and Heath Miller, who have been awarded BRTC Foundation Scholarships, and Kalee Reed, who has received an Academic Distinction Scholarship. This brings to 43 the total number of awards made to date for the semester.



Kelsey Shavalia

Shavalia is a graduate of Rector High School who plans to complete the Associate of Arts degree,

and then major in Mathematics at a four-year college. She hopes to teach Middle School Math. Her parents are Quentin and Renae Shavalia.

The son of Donnie and Tammy Hancock, Houston Hancock is a graduate of Hoxie High School. He plans to complete college basics at BRTC, and then transfer to Arkansas State University and work toward a Master's degree in Physical Therapy.

Houston Hancock

Miller, son of Mike and Sonya

Miller, son of Mike and Sonya



Heath Miller

Miller of Jonesboro, is a Valley View High School graduate. His major at BRTC will be Fire Science/EMT Paramedic. Foundation scholarships provide a \$1,000 award.



Kalee Reed

Paragould High School graduate Kalee Reed plans to complete an AA degree

at BRTC, and then transfer to ASU to complete a Bachelor's Degree. She is the daughter of Anita Reed and the late Mark Reed. The Academic Distinction Scholarship is based on students' GPA or class ranking, and provides a full tuition scholarship, renewable pending maintenance of the required GPA.

More information on scholarships is available on the BRTC web site (www.blackrivertech.org) or by contacting the Office of Financial Aid. Several scholarships remain open for qualifying students or prospective students, including Academic Distinction Scholarships and Mary Sallee Single Parent Scholarships.

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Fine Arts Visual Class Will Never Be the Same Again



Dr. Sandy Davis-Baltz

After many futile searches for a carousel projector, an apparatus made obsolete by digital technology, Dr. Sandy Davis-Baltz was faced with a monumental decision at the end of the Spring semester. She had to convert more than 850 photo slides for her Fine Arts Visual class to digital before the beginning of the Fall semester.

This is no easy task and it has taken Baltz the entire summer to update her photos. In the process, she has also had to update her lesson plans, study guides and tests to coin-

cide with the new technology.

While freely admitting her reluctance to "get out of the stone age" and embrace the idea of updating her slides, Baltz said there are benefits to having the photos on DVD.

With an additional 1,000 photos from a CD that was included

with one of her textbooks, Baltz is now able to incorporate more imagery in her classroom lectures. She is currently using photos from movies such as *Gladiator* to depict how close or far off Hollywood is from actual historical events. "To me this adds an interest for them [students]," Baltz said. "I was very excited about that."

Another benefit to having her photos in digital form is that she will soon be able to offer her FAV class online.

She said her daughter, Mantha,

and Mike Greene, Director of BRTC Computer Services, were the powerhouses behind getting the photo slides updated.

Because she had to scan the slides twice for a better resolution, Mantha Baltz put in more than 90 hours of work on the summer project. The scanner accepted only four slides at one time. The photos were scanned

in JPG form and then labeled. Greene then transferred the photos onto DVD for accessibility.

While the road to accepting the digital era has not been an easy one for Baltz, she does see the advantages to the new technology.

"What I like is that I can add images I didn't have before. I can show more if I want to," she said.

Bids

(Cont'd from Page 1)

"wet" lab for science use, a large lecture hall area, student lounge, faculty offices, restrooms and mechanical room. The expansion also allows for a new entrance into the facility. The project is being funded primarily through Higher Education Bonds, made possible by approval of voters statewide in November of 2006.

"This expansion will allow BRTC to offer more classes and better services to our growing number of students at Paragould," said BRTC President Richard Gaines. "In fact, with the expanded space, particularly the science lab, we will be able to offer the entire Associate of Arts degree on that campus. We are very pleased to be taking this step not only to expand the facilities but to

Fall 2008 New Student Orientation
Paragould - July 22 & Pocahontas - July 23

BRTC Fire Science Graduates Serving as 'Chief'



Pictured, from left, are Kevin McMasters, Kevin Lang, Alan Haskins, and Chris Jones.

Graduates of BRTC's Fire Science program have found success in their chosen field. Alan Haskins, Kevin Lang, Chris Jones, Kevin McMasters and Steve Beck are all currently serving as fire chief of their respective area fire departments.

Haskins earned a certificate in Fire Science in 1996 and an AAS degree in Fire Science in 2003. His fire service career began as a volunteer with the Ash Flat Fire Department at the age of 16, following in the footsteps of his father who retired from the department as assistant chief. He worked at various jobs before being hired by the Walnut Ridge Fire Department. He entered

college the following year at BRTC where he was a member of Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society, was on the Dean's list, and received the

Fire Science Departmental Award.

Haskins was promoted to captain after five years with the WRFD, and was promoted again nine years later to his current position of chief. His credits with the WRFD include being instrumental in establishing the Lawrence County Regional Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) Response Team stationed at Walnut Ridge.

Lang is currently serving as chief of the Paragould Fire Department. He earned a certificate in Fire Science in 1997 and an Associate's degree in Fire Science in 1998 and began working with the Paragould Fire Department.

Lang also became an Emergency Medical Technician in 1998 and a HAZMAT Technician in 2004. After six years with the Paragould Fire Department, he was promoted to shift captain in 2004 and then chief in 2007.

Sloan-Hendrix graduate Chris Jones received his AAS in Fire Science degree from BRTC in 2003 and is currently serving simultaneously as chief of the Imboden Volunteer Fire Department and captain/shift commander with the Walnut Ridge Fire Department.

Jones, a HAZMAT Technician, is also a member of the Lawrence County HAZMAT Response Team, and was appointed as a member of the Arkansas Fire Protection Services Board in 2007 by Governor Mike Beebe. He is an adjunct instructor with BRTC-FTC and the Arkansas Fire Academy, and is also a member of the Arkansas Fire Chiefs Association and the Arkansas Fire Fighters Association.

McMasters joined the Bay Fire Department in 1989 and received his AAS degree in Fire Science in 1994. He has served as a training officer

for the BFD, an adjunct instructor for Arkansas Fire Academy, and, since 2004, State Firefighters Association President.

Former president of the Northeast District of the Arkansas State Firefighters Association (1999-2001) and vice president of the State Firefighters Association (2001-2004), McMasters received the "Adjunct Instructor of the Year" award from Arkansas Fire Academy in 2006.

Beck is currently serving as chief of the Brookland Volunteer Fire Protection District and firefighter with the Jonesboro Fire Department. He received his certificate in Fire Protection in 1993 and received the "Firefighter of the Year" award from the Arkansas Firefighters Association in 2007. He was also a legislative representative for the Northeast Arkansas Firefighters Association from 2001-2005.

"We are proud of our Fire Science Alumni who have greatly contributed to the surrounding communities and continue to show excellence in the Fire Science field," said Steve Jones, BRTC Fire Science Instructor/Coordinator.

Electrical Apprenticeship Ceremony Held in Paragould

Six individuals recently completed an Electrical Apprenticeship Program Recognition Ceremony at the Greene County Industrial Training Center at BRTC-Paragould.

Brandon Chamberlain, Danny Dwyer, Anthony Halcomb, David Huffman, Billy Layne and Gary Winn completed the minimum required hours of classroom and on-the job training (OJT) and are now eligible to apply for their state journeyman exam.

The state approved program enables apprentices to test for industrial maintenance, residential and journeyman exams. In accordance with state law, electrical contractors are allowed thirty days to enroll employees in an

apprenticeship program.

Several industries acknowledged the students' accomplishments with special gifts to help them in their chosen industry. Chamberlain was awarded tools for having the highest grade point average. Terry Ryan with Klein Tools, Chuck Fletcher with Treadway Electric, and Leroy Green with Paragould Electrical Supply were also acknowledged for their support of the program.

The Electrical Apprenticeship Program runs yearly from August until May. For more information on the program, contact the Department of Continuing Education and Business Outreach, BRTC Paragould, 870-239-0969.



Pictured, from left, are Gary Winn, Danny Dwyer, Brandon Chamberlain, Dennis Gregory (3rd and 4th year instructor), David Huffman, Joe Foss (Foss Electric), Terry Ryan (Klein Tools), and Buck Lyerly (MGL Electric). Foss and Lyerly are both program sponsors and members of the Paragould electrical apprenticeship committee.

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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.

*The River's Edge is produced by the
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From the President's Desk



Richard Gaines

Educators across the state, as well as state legislators and others involved in funding higher education, basically agree on this: college access is important, but it is not enough. Completion of degrees and graduating are vitally important—necessary, even, if we are to move Arkansas up on the economic ladder. We know the old funding system which recognized enrollment as a basis for increasing operating and other funding is no longer appropriate, and will eventually be replaced

by a system that recognizes retention and graduation rates. Exactly what that system will look like is not fully known, because the state's institutions of higher education differ in their missions and in their resources.

Financial incentives based on performance measures can take many forms. One interesting approach is that of the state of Washington, where community and technical colleges will receive financial rewards for every student who achieves particular research-based benchmarks leading up to and including graduation. Washington institutions may receive extra money for students who earn their first 15 and first 30 college credits, earn their first 5 credits of college-level math, pass a pre-college writing or math course, earn a degree or complete a certificate. They also will be rewarded for students who earn a GED through their programs. These are all considered important accomplishments on the road to student

success in higher education.

It will be interesting to see how Arkansas' funding system is modified to reflect the new and appropriate emphasis on performance-based funding. Regardless of the system,

lawmakers must find a way that does not penalize institutions like ours, where many students' goals may be something other than completing a degree or certificate.

Summer II Continues Upswing

The number of students attending classes during the 2008 Summer II semester continues the trend of growth over the previous two years, with the enrollment in this second summer term standing at 447. This number represents a slight increase of about 2% over Summer II of last year.

The number of students attending both summer sessions in 2008 is 1095, a number that is more than 7% higher than those attending in both summer sessions last year and almost 20% more than were enrolled in both summer sessions of 2006.

Figures released by the Office of Student Services show that approxi-

mately 70% of those enrolled in Summer II are classified by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education as "non-traditional," or students 25 and over, while 30 percent fall in the "traditional," or under age 25, category. The percentages of female and male students are similar, with almost 70% females enrolled in Summer II.

Nearly 46% of Summer II students are from Randolph County. Other counties of origin include, in approximate percentages, Greene County, 18%; Lawrence County, 15%; Craighead County, 9%; Clay County, 7%; other in-state counties and out-of-state, 3% each.