



The River's Edge

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Pulaski Funds Gaines Scholarship Program



Officials from Pulaski Bank have given an additional \$12,500 to the Richard and Patti Gaines Scholarship Fund

for fall scholarships.

The program was established in 2006 as a way to honor longtime BRTC President Richard Gaines and his wife Patti, while helping support the community through educational funding. On hand for the presentation were, from left, Sandra Tweedy, Sr. Relationship Manager, Patti and Richard Gaines, Kevin Rose, Vice President for Commercial Loans, Tracy Radcliff, Assistant Vice President/Branch Manager, and Teressa Anderson, Senior Relationship Banker. In making the contribution, Rose expressed the bank's appreciation to Gaines for his leadership at the college and his work in guiding BRTC's growth since 1973.

Important Dates

- September 1**
Labor Day - Campus Closed
- September 3 - 4**
Dr. Ed Gordon - 2010 Meltdown
- September 12**
Foundation Board Mtg
- September 26**
Serendipity Mtg
- October 3**
Pulaski Bank/BRTC Foundation Golf Tournament
- October 28 - 29**
Marc Prensky - Teaching Digital Natives
- November 6**
Board of Trustees Mtg

Serendipity Announces 2008-09 Plans



Rhonda Swink (left) and Patti Blaxton look over materials for Serendipity.

monthly lunch meetings and discussions, Serendipity is a college activity to promote lifelong learning and a spirit of community among members.

The organization, now in its fourth year, is sponsored by the Department of Continuing Education with funding support by the BRTC Foundation. Meetings typically include music, video, readings and discussions relating to the theme and grounded in selected books. Serendipity also includes occasional short trips to regional places of interest. "We try to do things the members enjoy," said Blaxton, who, along with Ziegler, organizes the

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A new program of BRTC's Serendipity activities and events includes a planned September 19—20 visit by members to the historic St. Genevieve, Missouri, region, according to Patti Blaxton, Coordinator of Continuing Ed and Business Outreach. In addition, the new focus and readings for the year have also been developed. The first meeting of the year will be held Sept. 26.

The BRTC Serendipity club will focus on the theme, "A Balancing Act," during the 2008-09 sessions, according to Dr. Jan Ziegler, VP for Development. An organization designed to bring together retired or near-retirement individuals for

BRTC Presents

Dr. Edward E. Gordon

*Author of The 2010 Meltdown:
Solving the Impending Job Crisis*

Public Presentations Thursday, Sept. 4
Randolph County Development Center
9:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Job Readiness Certificate Offered



Phlebotomy students receiving the Career Readiness Certificate include, front row, from left, Deanna Hill, Josie Massingill, Corinne Manciaz. Back row, from left, Andrew Roe, Lisa Booth, Tammy Bice, Tammy Teel, Robert Anderson.

More than 65 job seekers have earned the Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate through Black River Technical College. The Adult Education Department, in conjunction with Career Pathways, provides both pre-assessment and instruction in *KeyTrain* and also administers the *WorkKeys* test.

"It's a good way to show employees what kind of basic skills an employee has," BRTC Adult

Education Instructor Jean Wilson said.

In January of this year, the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services (DWS) and Arkansas Workforce Investment Board opted for the Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) program. This certificate is a credential which shows an employee's knowledge of basic workplace skills in reading for information, applied mathematics and locating information, according to the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services. The CRC is being accepted by a growing number of employers and employees in the state and nation as a useful tool in the job training and hiring process. Approximately 4000 certificates have been issued by the DWS since the program began. A few of the employers in Northeast Arkansas including the CRC program as part of their application process are ARI, Nestle', Anchor Packaging, Custom-Pak, and V & B Manufacturing.

There are three levels of certification available: gold, silver, and bronze. The benefits of the certificate include less job turnovers, advantages in job seeking market and students see a reason to take coursework seriously. For more information, contact the Adult Education Department at 870-248-4130 or Business Outreach/Continuing Education at 870-248-4180.

Chappell Earns Degree

BRTC Paramedic/Fire Science Instructor Joe Chappell recently earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Leadership from Bellevue University, Bellevue, Nebraska.



Joe Chappell

He began working at BRTC in 2003 and completed an AAS in Paramedics in December 2004 and an AAS in Fire Science May 2007, both at BRTC. Before joining the team at BRTC, he worked as general manager of Emergency Care Ambulance in Black Rock.

"We are very proud of Joe's persistence and his success in receiving his degree," said Angie Caldwell, Division Chair for Technical Education. "He is an important part of our instructional team here at BRTC, and we appreciate the work he does for us."

Nursing Exam Pass Rates are "Outstanding"



Nursing Director Ramonda Housh and Academic VP Jack McCord

The numbers are in, and they are "outstanding," according to Academic Vice President Jack McCord, who announced the "first attempt" licensure exam rates for BRTC's PN and RN programs at the recent BRTC Board of Trustees meeting.

The 2008 BRTC nursing graduates' passage rates for the licensure exams exceeded state and national rates at both levels of nursing, according to data released by the Ar-

kansas State Board of Nursing. A total of 53 of the 56 RN graduates in the ARNEC Consortium, which includes BRTC and five other colleges, passed their exams on the first try, for a pass rate of 94.6%. This compares to a state rate of 84.9% and a national rate also of 84.9%.

"This is especially gratifying to us," McCord told the Board, "because initially the State Board of Nursing was reluctant to approve the RN degree program through the consortium, indicating they wanted to be sure the quality of the program was what it should be. I think this result, with us outperforming the state and national rates, should take care of those concerns."

BRTC's RN program is offered via Distance Education, with various parts of the instructional programming taught by instructors from each consortium member college. This is the third year BRTC has offered an

RN program, initially enrolling ten students at each of the six consortium member colleges. BRTC gained approval to increase the class size, and currently accepts up to twenty students in each RN cohort.

Practical Nursing pass rates for the 2008 graduates also topped state and national averages, with 92% of the 25 students enrolled passing the licensure exam on their first attempt. This compares with a state average

of 90.1%, and a national average first-attempt pass rate of 86.5%.

McCord praised nursing director Ramonda Housh and the nursing staff for their diligence and work with the students. "At a time when the state and the nation are facing such severe shortages of nurses, I think it speaks well of us that BRTC is doing this well in providing this caliber of education and training in this critical area."



Sponsored by Black River Technical College Office of Development Adult Education Business Outreach

Gaines Scholarship Winners Announced



Carrie Clements



Christy Hibbard



Anna Galvin



Crystal Reed



Marti Tate



Terri Milburn



Lawana Watson



Denise Wolfe

Eight students have been awarded the Richard and Patti Gaines Scholarship for the Fall 2008 semester, according to information from the Office of Financial Aid. Receiving a full tuition award are Carrie Clements, Anna Kay Galvin, Denise Wolfe, Terri Milburn, Christy

Hibbard, Crystal Reed, Marti Tate and Lawana Watson.

The scholarships are funded through contributions from Pulaski Bank as a gift to honor BRTC President Richard Gaines and his wife, Patti. Both are lifelong educators, with Richard Gaines having served

as the chief officer at BRTC for more than thirty years.

A Cross County High School graduate, Clements plans to complete her AA degree at BRTC before transferring to a university. She and her daughter live in Jonesboro. Galvin plans to pursue a career in

Paralegal/Pre-law. The daughter of James and Sharon Wolfe of Paragould, Wolfe plans to major in English and Psychology. She graduated from Buena Vista High School in Corona, California.

A Hoxie native, Milburn is pursuing a degree through BRTC's Practical Nursing program. Maynard High School graduate Christy Hibbard also is a nursing major, planning eventually to work toward a Master's degree in Oncology. Coming High School graduate Crystal Reed is currently enrolled in the PN program, and plans to become a Nurse Practitioner.

The daughter of Rick Tate of Imboden and Lisa Bailey of Benton, Tate is also pursuing a degree in Nursing. Pocahontas High School graduate Lawana Watson is completing college basics and plans to become a Special Education teacher, eventually completing a Master's degree in Counseling.



BRTC Faculty and Staff members attended inservice sessions to mark the beginning of the Fall 2008 semester. Pictured here are, seated, from left, Vickie French, Administrative Assistant to the President, Tina Harris, Dietetics Instructor, and Janice Harvey, Bookstore Manager.

Serendipity

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activities and meetings. Serendipity meetings include special holiday events and occasional guest speakers.

"Once again we have tried to choose a universal theme so that whether members have or have not read the material, they can easily identify with the presentations and share their ideas," Ziegler explained.

Even though the books Serendipity will include may deal with a theme that is common to all, she added, the settings of the stories will, as in the past, introduce members to parts of the world or to aspects of the human experience that may not be familiar.

"The stories are set in parts of the world that still seem to us foreign—but places that we probably should know and better understand," she said.

"For example, we'll be reading and discussing novels or seeing film of stories set in China, India, Zimbabwe, Iran and South Africa. What's amazing is to think that no matter who we are, we share certain struggles—like the constant quest to find balance in our world, wherever that world may be."

For more information on Serendipity, which meets once per month on Fridays from 11:30 to 1, contact Blaxton at 248-4000, EXT 4181, or go to the BRTC website at www.blackrivertech.org, and follow the links "About Us" and "Community Partnerships."

LETA Blood Drive



LETA student Blake Barnes of North Little Rock gives blood during the American Red Cross Blood Drive, Aug. 22.

The BRTC Law Enforcement Training Academy sponsored an American Red Cross blood drive on the Pocahontas campus last Thursday, according to LETA Instructor Victoria Barkley-Robinett. "I am so thankful for how well it went," said Robinett, referring to the success of the blood drive. A total of 38 pints was collected, which exceeded the goal of 28.

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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



Richard Gaines

Everyone in state leadership positions accepts the need for Arkansas to improve its rates of degree attainment. This simply means that we must find ways to increase the number of our citizens who graduate from college. Our state ranks near the bottom in this vital statistic, and it is a vital statistic for two key reasons. For one thing, those with degrees in higher education tend to earn significantly higher salaries than those without degrees. Those higher salaries may not guarantee happi-

ness, but they do generally translate into a higher standard of living, and they certainly translate into a healthier state economy overall. Secondly, the jobs of the future require increasingly sophisticated skills and knowledge. When prospective new industries decide where they want to locate, they consider whether the state or region has a sufficiently educated workforce. To do this, they often compare that low "degree attainment" rate in our state with other states' rates. The truth is, Arkansas must increasingly compete not just with other states, but with a global workforce. BRTC and those it serves will have opportunity to learn more about the challenges and the opportunities the changing workforce demands bring us. We hope the community will join us for a presentation by one of the country's most acclaimed writers and speakers, Dr. Ed Gordon. His scheduled visit includes sessions for specific audiences, including for the public on September 4.

College Adds New Staff



Ronnie Walker



Tracy Cobbs



Lisa Parks

Ronnie Walker has been hired as Construction Manager for both the Pocahontas and Paragould campuses. In addition to his oversight of all construction projects on campus, he will also have oversight of construction and restoration of the historic structures owned by BRTC. He holds an associate's degree in Historic Preservation Trades, which he received from Phillips Community College in Helena, and is certified by the Arkansas Institute for Building Preservation Trades. He previously worked at ASU-Jonesboro overseeing the Lakeport Plantation Project. He and his wife, Sonya, reside in Pocahontas.

Tracy Cobbs joins the BRTC staff

as secretary for Student Services on the Paragould campus. She is currently working on her AA degree at BRTC. Prior to joining BRTC, she served as executive director at The Pregnancy Help Center, which is associated with Lifehouse Ministries. She and her two teenage sons reside in Paragould.

Jonesboro resident Lisa Parks has been hired as a full-time instructor of English. She has been working the past couple of years as an adjunct instructor for both BRTC and Arkansas State University, and has also worked in interior design. A graduate of Jonesboro High School, she earned both a BA and MA in English from ASU.