



The River's Edge

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Jackson Returns to BRTC Board of Trustees



John R. Jackson

Governor Mike Beebe has appointed John Jackson, Jr., to the BRTC Board of Trustees. A retired banker and local civic leader, Jack-

son had previously served one seven-year term as a BRTC Trustee from 1996-2003. His new term runs until July 1, 2015.

Jackson replaces Joe Wessell of Paragould who had been appointed by then-Governor Mike Huckabee.

"I am honored to be appointed," Jackson said. "Whatever contribution I can make to BRTC, I am happy to do. I have always considered the college to be one of the community's greatest assets. It is the pathway for so many people to build a better future for themselves and their families, as well as being a bridge to economic health and pros-

perity for the entire community. Being a small part of all this is a responsibility I do not take lightly, but it is one I look forward to fulfilling."

"We are pleased to have John back on the Board," said BRTC President Richard Gaines. "He has always been a great supporter and hard worker on behalf of this college. Even when he was not a member of the Board of Trustees, John remained involved through his work with the BRTC Foundation. I value his ideas and his judgment, and I know he will continue to be an asset to this institution."

Important Dates

August 6

ASSET Test - 8:00 a.m.

August 7

Board of Trustees Meeting

August 11 - 12

In-Service

August 12

ASSET Test - 8:00 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.

August 14

ASSET Test - 8:00 a.m.

August 18

Classes Begin

September 3 - 4

Dr. Ed Gordon - 2010 Meltdown

October 28 - 29

Marc Prensky—Teaching Digital Natives

GED Grads Show 'sheer determination'



GED graduates recognized for completing high school equivalency program July 17.

Black River Technical College recently held its 2008 GED (General Education Degree) graduation at the Randolph County Development Center.

Thirty-two graduates walked during the ceremony which recognized 110 students who earned their GED during the past academic year, according to Peggy Weir, Director of Adult Education. Approximately 100 friends and family member were on hand to celebrate with the graduates.

Third Judicial Circuit Judge Phil Smith was guest

speaker. "It's an honor to be here speaking to you today," he said to the graduates. "Because of sheer determination, you have followed your dream."

One particular graduate stood out at this year's graduation. Beelys Cox, native of Nicaragua, received her GED after being part of the program for three years. When she applied to the program in 2005 after moving to Rector, Cox could not speak English. Her husband Jim had to help her fill out her application. Several ESL (English as a Second Language) and GED classes later, Cox, 27, now holds her diploma.

While in Nicaragua, Cox had two years of college education under her belt but many of the classes did not transfer. "I had to start from zero," she said, "but it was worth it."

Cox will begin college at BRTC-Paragould this Fall and plans to pursue a degree in teaching with a focus on math and science.

For more information on the GED program, contact BRTC's Department of Adult Education at 870-248-4000.

Foundation Board Sets Golf Event for Oct. 3

The annual BRTC Foundation-Pulaski Bank Golf Tournament will be held on Friday, October 3. Holding the event on Friday, as well as modifying the tournament structure so that the morning and afternoon flights are separate segments, should make the annual fundraiser more appealing, according to event chairs Dr. Roger Johnson of BRTC and Kevin Rose of Pulaski Bank. Foundation Chair Mike Miller announced the changes at a meeting of the BRTC Foundation Board July 31.

As it has in past years, Pulaski Bank is underwriting the tournament with a \$10,000 donation. Proceeds, which typically fall in the \$25,000-plus range, help to fund twelve student scholarships and other Foundation activities.

On hand for their first Foundation Board meeting were new members

Melissa Davis of Pocahontas and Keri Wiznerowicz of Memphis, Tennessee. Both joined their fellow board members in "assignments" to contact prospective businesses and individuals for golf sponsorships.

A "three-star sponsorship," which includes a team entry fee, a golf cart, and appropriate business signage, costs \$500. Additional sponsorship levels are also available.

In other business, the Foundation Board heard an update of construction projects; approved the fiscal year-end financial report; approved SEAS (Special Event and Activity Support) funding for \$4,000 for the 08-09 academic year; reviewed an update of the *Growing Strong 08* annual campaign; and began preliminary discussion of the annual Foundation Gala.

New Hires/Promotion Announced at BRTC

According to the Office of Personnel at Black River Technical College, three positions were recently filled and one staff member promoted. Tonya Hankins and Cindy Matthews have been hired as full-time nursing instructors, Margo Johnson has been hired in the Office of Career Pathways, and Glenda Hawkins has received a promotion in the Department of Finance.



Tonya Hankins

Hankins worked the past five years at Lawrence Memorial Hospital in Walnut Ridge, most recently as Director of Nursing and ER Director. She worked for 11 years prior to that at St. Bernard's

Regional Medical Center in Jonesboro as a cardiac and GI nurse. She earned a BS in Nursing from Arkansas State University. She and her husband, Law Enforcement instructor Chris Hankins, reside in Hoxie with their three children.



Cindy Matthews

Pocahontas native Cindy Matthews recently returned to the area from Memphis where she has spent the past 28 years working in the nursing field. Her most recent employment was with Methodist North Hospital. She also taught for six years at Baptist School of Nursing. She earned her BS in Nursing from the University of

LETA Looks at Segway



LETA Director Steve Shults and Sergeant Scott Bland listen to Robert Peevey, officer from the Arkansas State University Police Department, as he demonstrates how a Segway works. Peevey gave a short presentation beforehand of the perks of having a Segway.

Robert Peevey, officer with the Arkansas State University Police Department, recently presented the "Benefits of Segway Patrol" at the BRTC Law Enforcement Training Academy.

"It will balance to you," Peevey said as he stepped onto the machine. "It's one of the best machines I've

every seen in my life,"

In an effort to "Go Green," fuel saving options are being looked at across the board. For law enforcement, Segways are an option.

The personal transporter device is battery operated with the capability of running up to 12 hours before it needs re-charging.

One advantage of a Segway is height; a second advantage is the fact that the device prevents officer fatigue for those on foot patrol.

The Segway has the capability to travel at a speed of more than twelve miles per hour, resulting in a quicker response time for officers. It also has the capability to get to certain areas a patrol unit might not be able to access such as back alleys, campus classrooms and into buildings.

The device is installed with an alarm to prevent theft.

Peevey said the Segway is good for public relations. It gets people's attention and is a good conversation starter, he said.

Peevey gave the presentation as part of an instructor development class he participated in at BRTC.

Michigan, and her Master's in Nursing from Arkansas State University.



Margo Johnson

Margo (Davis) Johnson, who resides in Pocahontas with her son, is the new Career Pathways Recruiter/Counselor. She is an Oak Ridge Central graduate and completed her general education courses at BRTC before transferring to Williams Baptist and earning a Bachelor's degree in Business with a Psychology minor. She previously worked for the Randolph County Judge's Office.

A life-time resident of Pocahontas, Hawkins has been promoted



Glenda Hawkins

from Secretary to the position of Accounting Tech II in the Department of Finance. She holds an AA from Crowley's Ridge College, an AAS from BRTC and a BS in Accounting degree from ASU. Before joining the BRTC staff almost ten years ago, Hawkins worked at the Brown Shoe Company in Pocahontas for 22 years and one year for Joe Pace, CPA.

Classes begin August 18

Restoration Work Brings Changes, New Discoveries

The long-awaited restoration of the Rice-Upshaw House near Dalton moved into full gear in July. The first month's efforts have produced significant changes and brought a few new discoveries. With the removal of much of the non-original



Ricky Johnson, Jr. (left) and Ricky Johnson, Sr. (far right) remove stones from chimney with Keith Meredith, contractor, overseeing project.

materials, the 180-year-old log structure has a "new" old look—one that gives hint of what the final result will be once the historic building is restored to an 1836-era interpretation. The projected completion date is March 2009.

Project Architect Tommy Jameson of Little Rock terms the

visible work to date as mostly "selective demolition," and said the work of the past few weeks has "proceeded carefully and well." In addition to the removing of siding and other fabrics to expose the logs, workers also disassembled the stone chimney in preparation for upcoming phases of work. This will involve removal of the south porch followed by carefully bracing the walls so that the entire structure can be lifted to allow for pouring new foundation piers.

Elevating the structure will also make possible further investigation by the Arkansas Archeological Survey, this time to examine the soil beneath the house to learn more of its original form and function. Current time projections call for the AAS to be on-site during the first two weeks of September.

The stone chimney will be reconstructed to what researchers believe to be its original size, somewhat larger than the just-dismantled chimney. "Based on an early photo

and other evidences," Jameson said "we believe this was not the original chimney, though in all likelihood it had been constructed with the stones from the original chimney. So when the chimney is reconstructed, we will use as many of these stones as possible." The project's stonemason, Ken Hurd of Sparta, Missouri, along with Eric Samons of Mountain Home, log specialist, were on hand to assess the condition of the stone and the logs and to determine what additional materials would be required for the restoration work.



Loom pieces, mold for lead shot.

During the pre-cleaning phase, workers with KMC Contractors discovered several artifacts in the debris under the stairs and in the upstairs area. These included what are believed to be additional pieces to the loom which had been stored on the rafters for many years. One of the pieces appears to be a well-preserved shuttle. In addition, workers found a small device apparently once used for pouring lead shot. Numerous paper documents, including old checks, holiday cards, and old letters were also recovered.

The restoration of the Rice-Upshaw structure and the Looney-French Tavern/Inn, along with related research on the two historic log structures, are at the heart of Project REACH (Researching Early Arkansas Cultural Heritage), a project of Black River Technical College. The work is made possible by the donation of the two properties to the college by family descendants of the structure's builders, Reuben Rice and William Looney, in 1828 and 1833, respectively. Funding for the project is provided by grants from Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resource Council.

For more information on the project, contact Dr. Jan Ziegler at janz@blackrivertech.edu.



Photo taken after chimney was dismantled.

Fall Orientation Called 'hugely successful'



Entering Freshmen Bradley Williams and Katherine Holder look at their Orientation Schedule Forms during Fall Orientation held at the BRTC-Pocahontas campus.

More than 400 entering freshmen and transfer students attended either the Paragould or Pocahontas campus

Fall 2008 Orientation sessions held July 22-23. The number, though significantly more than the college staff had anticipated, was nonetheless thrilling, Laura Kueter-Woods, Coordinator of Student Retention and Placement, said.

"We knew to expect a large group at both locations for the Fall 2008 orientations, but to actually see that many in attendance who made their choice to attend BRTC was a very exciting feeling," she said.

"Everyone worked together to ensure the day went smoothly and as quickly and efficiently as possible. It was truly an institutional team effort," she added.

"I would consider both days to be hugely successful for BRTC," Woods said.

The Paragould campus attracted 140 students while the Pocahontas campus counted 261 in attendance.

"It was very positive from the student's perspective," Dr. Roger Johnson, Division Chair General Education, said.

He said as he waited for his turn to speak at the Paragould campus orientation, one student's mother sat next to him and told Johnson that she was so excited about what her child had learned that day.

"The interaction I had with the

parents and students was positive," he said.

"The purpose of New/Transfer Student Orientation is to share pertinent information with these incoming students about BRTC policies, procedures and services that will better enable them to achieve their individual academic goals," Woods said.

Students were made aware of a variety of topics including registration, the advising process, financial aid, time management and study skills.

Classes for Fall semester begin August 18 at both campuses.

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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

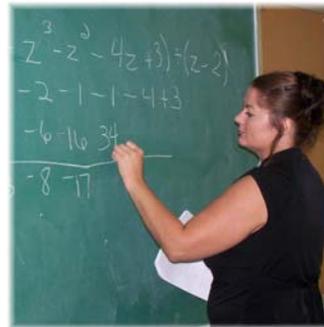
A series of articles in recent issues of *USA TODAY* addresses what many are calling the "turning point" for community colleges such as ours here at BRTC, saying the two-year institutions are increasingly recognized for the role we play in the economic future of our community and our nation. According to the article, community colleges "train 80% of the country's police officers, firefighters and emergency medical technicians and more than half of its new nurses and health care workers."

The writer could be speaking directly about BRTC, because we educate and train students for all these critical careers and more.

The article also points out that individuals whose jobs have disappeared because of globalization typically retrain in institutions such as ours, and that we are the college of choice for those who need to develop foundational skills in math or English, as well as those whose native language is not English. Again, these descriptors also fit BRTC and other two-year colleges throughout the state. Though we were originally intended to serve a "local" function, two-year colleges, the article continues, "have grown even more important on a larger stage," since more of the nation's workforce must be educated.

That is who we are and why we exist. We stand ready, with the continued community support we have long received in our service area, to do our part.

Student Volunteers to Tutor



Heather Simmons

What began as a small study group for an Intermediate Algebra class turned into volunteer tutoring sessions for Heather Simmons. She spent both Summer sessions as a fulltime student using her spare time as an Introductory/Intermediate Algebra tutor.

"It wasn't on purpose," Simmons, 28, said about her gig as a tutor. In the beginning it was just Simmons and another student, who were both taking an Intermediate Algebra class, getting together to study. Word quickly spread and other students

asked to join the study group with Simmons leading the way. Simmons used her free time before and after classes to tutor students struggling with Intro/Intermediate Algebra.

"None of it would've happened if Mrs. Jackson and Mrs. Jarrett [both Algebra Instructors at BRTC] hadn't done such a fantastic job teaching me. They gave me the knowledge, which in turn gave me the confidence," Simmons said.

A former Waterloo employee, Simmons began classes in Fall 2007. She is currently a criminal justice major and is working on her AAS with plans to graduate in Spring 2009.

With the Summer sessions wrapped up, Simmons is gearing up for the Fall semester. She plans to continue being a volunteer tutor but with more flexible hours.

"Sometimes, I can't get them to love math as I do, but I can get them to understand it better so they can tolerate it," she said with a smile.