



The River's Edge

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Important Dates

- August 6**
Last day of Summer II classes
- August 6**
Board of Trustees Mtg
- August 14**
Foundation Board Mtg
- August 17**
In-Service
- August 24**
Fall Classes Begin
- October 2**
Annual IBERIABANK/BRTC Foundation Golf Tournament
- October 21-22**
Holocaust Survivor Presentations

Paragould Opens New Academic Complex

BRTC students attending class on the Paragould campus this fall will find most of their classes are held in the new 21,000 sq. ft. Academic Complex connected to the BRTC-Paragould/Greene County Industrial Training Center facility. At approximately \$2.6 million, the new complex complete with science lab moves the campus to a new level, since BRTC will now be able to offer a complete Associate of Arts degree on this campus.

"This facility signifies a longstanding commitment we have made to the citizens of Paragould and Greene County," said BRTC President Richard Gaines. "We are very excited with the increased levels of academic studies and student

services this new complex makes possible," he continued.



Vicki Kaykendall, Director of Off-Campus Operations in Paragould, stands in the newly completed science lab.

Construction of the complex was funded by \$2.2 million in Higher Education bonds, \$225,000 in General Improvement Funds, and \$163,673 in Tuition and Fee Revenue, according to Vice President for Finance Loretta Williams. The project includes, in addition to the science lab, seven classrooms, two computer labs, and large and small lecture halls with combined capacity of up to 100 people. The building also features a student lounge and faculty/staff offices.

(Continued on page 3)

College Receives Entergy Grant for MSSPS



Janna Guthrey, MSSPS Committee Chair

BRTC's program to provide scholarships for single parent students received a boost last week

with the awarding of an Entergy sub-grant and matching grant for \$2,990, according to the Office of Development. The grant will be used to fund \$500 Mary Sallee Single Parent Scholarships for six eligible students attending in the Fall semester. The six will be designated "Entergy Scholars" in accordance with grant guidelines.

"We are very pleased to have been selected for this award, and we appreciate the Entergy Charitable Foundation," said Dr. Jan Ziegler, VP for Development. She said that 32 affiliate chapters of the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship fund, including the MSSPS program, had

applied for the total \$30,000 in sub-grant funds.

"I want to acknowledge in particular the efforts of MSSPS Committee Chair Janna Guthrey in spearheading our college's annual Silent Auction held in conjunction with the Christmas potluck. This event is one of the ways the MSSPS program is funded, and it makes us competitive for securing additional matching monies and grants such as the Entergy sub-grant. Janna did a superb job in promoting this event, and I credit her with making it easy for Entergy to give us a grant."

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Archeology Work Seeks Answers about REACH Structure

Did the Looney Tavern have porches when it was originally constructed? And if so, where and what size? What about the dogtrot/breezeway? When was it enclosed? What about the cellar—did it have a floor originally, or was it packed dirt as it now is? What purposes did the cellar serve from the time of its construction in Arkansas' Territorial era through the 176-year evolution of the historic structure?

These and many other questions are among those for which the archeologists on-site at the Looney Tavern restoration project are seeking answers—or at least clues, as they seek for drip lines or other evidence in the soils they painstakingly remove and sift through. They are seeking also for any artifacts, including shards of pottery, old nails, buttons, anything that may shed light on the life and activities of the pioneering William Looney and his family.

Restoration work on the Looney Tavern is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2010, according to Dr. Ziegler, VP for Development at BRTC. Funding for REACH comes through grants from Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources Council. These funds are available only to qualified state agency applicants and can be used only for historic preservation projects, Ziegler said. BRTC became an eligible applicant when family members Jean Upshaw (Rice House) and Jack and Christina French (Looney Tavern) donated the structures to the college for preservation efforts.

"We are already receiving calls from individuals and groups who want to tour these two sites, and we, too, are eager to be able to move into the interpretation phase. In early August, we are scheduled to

provide an in-service program on REACH for public school teachers. This helps them fulfill their Arkansas History requirements and also prepares them for the time in the not too distant future when they will be able to bring their students for field trips to experience our area's rich heritage. The findings of the archeologists will add greatly to the information to be shared with students and others, Ziegler noted. "When we combine the archeology, the historical research, the oral histories and the architectural investigations, we can get an amazingly detailed understanding of what happened, and why, in the early days."



Marion Haynes (left) and Jessica Howe, with the Arkansas Archeological Survey team, sift through dirt in search of artifacts.

Fall Orientation Shows Increase



Instructors Courtney Clements, Jana Culp and Lisa Inman assist students during Fall 2009 Orientation.

The number attending BRTC's Orientation for new and transfer students is up over last year's number, according to Laura Kueter-Woods, Coordinator of Student Retention and Placement. A total of 417 attended the sessions held last week on the Pocahontas and Paragould campuses.

Students attending the sessions had opportunity to learn their way around campus as well as to gain awareness of BRTC policies and services, including financial aid, time management and study skills. Upon completion of the orientation, they were able to register and enroll in classes. The impact on registration was immediate, according to Technical Division Chair Angie Caldwell. "We went from having twenty classes closed to 46 closed sections after the orientation and registration," she said.

Kueter-Woods expressed her appreciation to "the many individuals who helped make these two days a huge success." She added that students who have not yet enrolled may still do so after submitting admission documents and completing on Online Orientation through the BRTC website (www.blackrivertech.edu).

Scholarship Awarded



Zach Mullen

Benjamin Zachary "Zach" Mullen of Walnut Ridge has been awarded the Academic Distinction Scholarship to attend BRTC beginning with the Fall 2009 semester. Zach is the son of Pam Mullen and the late Bill Mullen. The Walnut Ridge High School graduate plans to major in science and prepare for a medical career.

The scholarship covers full tuition renewable up to four semesters provided the recipient successfully completes 12 credit hours per semester and maintains a cumulative 3.00 GPA, increasing to 3.25 after the first two semesters. Recipients must be residents of Arkansas graduating from an accredited high school. Selection is based on students having an ACT composite score of at least 24 or being in the top 10% of his/her graduating class with at least a 3.00 GPA.

For more information on the Academic Distinction Scholarship, contact Natasha Rush at 870-248-4000.

New Faculty Join BRTC



Carl Dyer

Carl Dyer of Jonesboro has been hired as instructor for BRTC's Law Enforcement Training Academy, announced LETA Director Steve Shults. He most recently worked as a patrolman for the Jonesboro Police Department and, prior to that, served on the SWAT team for the Germantown (Tennessee) Police Department. Dyer holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminology from Arkansas State University.



Betty J. Busby

Betty J. Busby of Pocahontas has joined the General Education Department as a full-time Biology Instructor. She has both Bachelor and Master of Science in Education degrees in Biology from Arkansas State University. Busby previously spent 32 years working as a Biology teacher for the Pocahontas School District.

Restoration Project Transforms Looney Tavern

The restoration work on the Looney Tavern has already produced dramatic results, with all modern materials removed to reveal an imposing 1833 log structure believed to have been built by William Looney and enslaved African Americans who migrated here from the Holston River Valley in Tennessee in the early 1800s. The territorial-era tavern, together with a second structure, the Reuben Rice house, comprise Project REACH (Researching Early Arkansas Cultural Heritage), a historic preservation project of BRTC.

What researchers want to know now is what the building looked like in 1833 or so when its owner first opened its doors to his customers.

The porches and all siding have been removed. Flooring in the dogtrot has been removed, exposing five original “sleepers,” or floor joists. Archeologists from the Arkansas Archeological Survey are currently on-site to conduct investigations in the dogtrot and in the structure’s west pen near the fireplace and cellar areas.

“Through the archeologists’ work,” said Ronnie Walker, Construction Manager at BRTC, “we will learn a lot about the structure and hopefully, its ‘story.’” Among the questions which may be answered is whether the original structure had porches and stairs to the second floor, and if so, where and in what configuration. “For example,” he explained, “we want to know whether the winder stair was original to the structure, or whether the original stairway was a simple ship stair. We hope to determine whether the breezeway was open for a period of time, and if so, when.” Any artifacts that are found through the archeological investigation or “dig” will help to uncover the history and development of the structure and its early inhabitants, Walker said.

The Looney Tavern consists of two pens of unequal size connected by a dogtrot. Two large chimneys serve the East and West pens. Historical and architectural research to date suggests the larger West pen served as the tavern



area with the area above it likely serving as an inn. The smaller East pen which seems to have been open to the roof may have served as a kitchen area, Walker explained. The flooring in both the second floor above the large West pen and the flooring on the ground floor are original and will be preserved in their original state as much as possible, according to Walker.

Once the archeological work is completed, the next restoration phase is rather unique, according to Walker, but absolutely the best approach on this project. The contractor will remove the roof in either two or three segments, using a large crane to set these, intact, carefully on the ground. Once the entire roof is removed, the rest of the structure will be disassembled and carefully numbered so it can be properly reassembled once the logs have been repaired. In some instances, logs cannot be salvaged and must be replaced with hand-hewn logs as was the case in the Rice House restoration. At one point in the process, all that will be left standing will be the two chimneys.

“Actually,” Walker noted, “the chimney on the West pen will be left totally intact and will be tuck pointed and repaired as it stands. The chimney on the east pen, which is in much worse shape, will be disassembled down to the ‘shoulders’ of the chimney, and then rebuilt.” Walker explained that removal of the upper portion of the East pen chimney will make possible to swing each roof section over that portion of the house while taking the roof down.

The complete disassembly of the lower story of the house also is necessary to ensure the logs on this rather large structure can be properly assessed and repaired or replaced. This procedure also will prevent any damage to the West pen chimney.

“We’ll know a lot more after next week,” Walker said. “We know that once a structure is completed, the construction may stop for a time, but the evolution goes on through the years.”

MSSPS

The MSSPS program funds scholarships to Randolph County single mothers and fathers who are pursuing higher education, who have custody of their children and meet other eligibility requirements.

Since the program’s beginning, almost \$100,000 in scholarships has been awarded to county residents. The program is also funded by community donations and by payroll withholdings or other staff contributions.

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For more information or to donate to the program thru the BRTC’s Foundation Annual Campaign, contact BRTC at 870-248-4000.

MSSPS Applications are on the college’s Financial Aid website, www.blackrivertech.edu.

Deadline for the Fall 2009 semester is September 15.

Paragould

(Cont’d from page 1)

These additional spaces mean that the original facility can be re-configured to allow for enhanced media, advisement, and financial aid services, Gaines pointed out. In conjunction with the new complex, renovation work on part of the existing industrial training facility resulted in converting one shop lab into a conventional classroom, and the old student lounge area has been transformed into a Student Service area.

Planned future construction on the

Paragould campus includes a maintenance building to house storage and office space for maintenance, custodial and campus security staff.

Approximately 25% of BRTC’s student body is enrolled for credit classes on the Paragould campus. In addition, the facility includes the Greene County Industrial Training Center where a wide range of workforce training programs and courses serve the needs of area employers.

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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

As we near the completion of the Paragould Academic Complex, an addition to the BRTC-Paragould physical plant adding about 21,000 sq. ft. to this campus, it is appropriate to look back at the evolution of this component of our educational program. As with most worthwhile endeavors, BRTC's partnership in Greene County did not happen overnight, but over a considerable period of time. When BRTC became a two-year college, our designated "service area" included four counties: Clay,

Randolph, Lawrence and Greene. In 1995, leaders in the Paragould community contacted us here at BRTC and requested that we offer college classes in the Paragould area. This was accomplished when we began that same year by attending classes on campus of what was at that time the Northeast Arkansas School District. The Legislature appropriated operations funding for this purpose.

In 1997, the Arkansas Legislature appropriated funding for construction. This was followed by additional appropriations from the Legislature and discretionary funding from the Governor's Office in 1999. The city of Paragould donated a ten-acre site on the northeast edge of the city, and the County helped with road and utility work. With leadership from members of the Greene County Industrial Training Consortium, we were able to provide a facility which would support the college's transfer courses as well as provide workforce

training for the citizens of the area. This facility opened in 2001.

Enrollment in credit classes at BRTC-Paragould has increased steadily, growing from 89 students in 1995 in that first fall semester to 459 students in the 2009 Spring semester, or around 25% of BRTC's total enrollment. Early enrollment numbers hint at another record number on the Paragould campus this fall.

While we have been able in the past to offer most of the courses required for completion of the Associate of Arts degree, we were not able to offer the complete degree due to the need for a science lab. This new construction project now removes that need, so that students can now complete the entire two-year transfer degree on the BRTC-Paragould campus. The new facility also makes it possible for us to provide enhanced student services, including improved access to library resources, financial aid, and academic advisement.

Paragould is a vibrant and progressive community, and the rela-

tionship between the college and the community has always been a good one. We look for many more milestones and great things to come as we continue to grow together.

Reminder:

**Annual
IBERIABANK/
BRTC
Foundation Golf
Tournament**

**Friday,
October 2, 2009**