

# THE RIVER'S EDGE



Black River Technical College

Pocahontas · Paragould

## Jason Smith Selected as Vice President of Enrollment Management

BRTC is pleased to announce the selection of Jason Smith, J.D., as Vice President of Enrollment Management. Smith will assume leadership January 2, 2019.

Smith, a native of Corning, earned his bachelor in Interdisciplinary Studies from Arkansas State University in 2005 and his juris doctorate in law from University of Arkansas at Little Rock in 2010. His experience in enrollment management began at Arkansas State University where he held the positions of Recruitment Advisor, Assistant Director of Recruitment, adjunct Instructor of College Student Personnel Services, and finally Associate Director of Enrollment Services.

At BRTC, Smith will oversee the offices of students, financial aid, admissions, Career Pathways, counseling, veteran relations, and disability services.

"I want to thank President Ziegler and the selection committee for this amazing opportunity," said Smith. "Growing up in Corning, I have always admired the outstanding commitment the BRTC faculty and staff have for the students they serve in our community. It is a great honor to be chosen to lead the Enrollment Management division. I look forward to serving alongside the talented and dedicated educators at BRTC."

Smith is married to his wife of 11 years, Ashley, who teaches at Fox Meadow Elementary School and they have 2 children, Weston age 6 and Anna Beth age 4. Smith and his family live in Jonesboro.



Jason Smith, J.D.

## ProMed Ambulance, Inc., Offers EMT/Paramedic Scholarships

On December 7, ProMed Ambulance, Inc., CEO Ken Kelley began the ProMed Ambulance, Inc., EMT Scholarship and the ProMed Ambulance, Inc., Paramedic Scholarship. These scholarships will be awarded yearly to program students. By offering this scholarship, Kelley said, "We hope to increase the pipeline of employable EMTs and Paramedics." Currently, not enough EMTs or Paramedics are trained for employment. Kelley hopes this scholarship will solve that problem in Northeast Arkansas.

Scholarships will be offered first to Randolph County students then to Lawrence County students. The EMT scholarship is for \$1,000 and the paramedic Scholarship is for \$2,000.

Contact (870) 248-4017 for more information.



John Plumley, ProMed NEA Area Manager; Ken Kelley, ProMed CEO; Dr. Jan Ziegler, Interim BRTC president, Matt Smith, BRTC EMT/Paramedic instructor

### JOIN IT DOWN

December 24-January 1

Campuses Closed

January 2

Campuses Open

January 14

Spring Classes Begin

January 25

Serendipity Meetings

## CAMPUS BRTC Celebrates Graduation

**AROUND** December is always a special time at BRTC – not only because of the holidays and the sharing that occurs on campus, but because we celebrate our students' success and progression to their next step in life!



Neal Harwell

### Winter 2018 Commencement

**December 13, 2018**

BRTC's Winter 2018 Commencement graduated 279 students in 28 degrees and certificates.

The student speaker was Brian Smith, a resident of Pocahontas who graduated with his Associate of Science in Agriculture. The speaker was Neal Harwell, BRTC Dean of Students.

Twenty-six percent of graduates were from Randolph County, 20% were from Greene, 15% from Craighead, 13% from Lawrence, 11% from Clay, and 5% were from Missouri. The remaining 10% were from across the state of Arkansas.

### LETA Graduation

**November 16, 2018**

The BRTC Law Enforcement Training Academy Graduation graduated 57 cadets from the 13-week course. Officers are required to score at least 70% on each exam and consistently fire at least 80% during firearms training in order to graduate.



Director Steve Shults; Priscilla L. Jones, Paragould PD & 1st woman to place in top 3 in the Top Physical Training category; Sgt. Robert Bemis

Cody Jackson, Jonesboro Police Department, received the Top Overall Award by having the highest overall average in the areas of academics, firearms, and physical fitness. Top Academic award went to Levi Chism, Jonesboro Police Department. Rand Lace, Augusta Police Department, received the Top Firearms award. Top Physical Training award went to Phillip Taylor, Salem Police Department.

Daniel Rivas, Jr., of the Marion County Sheriff's Office was selected as class spokesman. Bradley K. West, Beebe Police Department, opened the ceremony by singing the National Anthem. Sergeant Robert Bemis, 24-year Pennsylvania State Police trooper, was the guest speaker.

### PN and RN Graduation and Pinning

**December 11, 2018**

BRTC's Practical Nursing (PN) and Registered Nursing (RN) Graduation and Pinning graduated 21 PNs and 48 RNs. Sandra Green, past BRTC nursing instructor, was the guest speaker. PN class officers were Courtney Keck, president; Rodney Green, vice president; Elizabeth Anger, secretary; Kaylee Campbell, treasurer. RN class representatives were Jeremy Sparks and Brently Massey.



#### Calendar

- 1/11 Last Day to Pay for Spring
- 1/14 Spring Begins
- 1/16 Last day to add a class, set up payment plan, be reinstated
- 1/21 MLK, Jr. Day – No Classes

#### Scholarship

##### Deadlines

Don't miss out on applying for scholarships!! Contact us today!

- 1/1 Final financial aid paperwork
- 1/15 Mary Sallee Single Parent Scholarship
- 2/1 Sylvia Cagle Single Parent Scholarship
- 3/1 Remaining BRTC Scholarships  
Catfish Farmers of Arkansas

#### Your Preference!

We want your feedback! If you want to receive the newsletter via email, contact Karen at [KarenL@blackrivertech.edu](mailto:KarenL@blackrivertech.edu).

the 411

# THEIR MARK A Student Success Story: Hunter Medlock

MAKING

In February 2019, 19-year-old Hunter Medlock left Arlington, Kentucky, and moved to Ravenden to be with his grandparents. Right away, Hunter came to BRTC in Pocahontas and visited the Adult Education department and immediately began his GED and looking for a job.

Hunter was introduced to Mike Willyerd of the Arkansas Workforce Center in Paragould and was encouraged to apply for the WIOA Youth Services job program. After a successful interview, Hunter began working through the Arkansas Workforce Center for the City of Pocahontas at the Sports Complex. He also attended morning GED classes at BRTC.

Hunter finished his GED in April 2018 and was then able to go to work full-time at the Sports Complex. "Here's a great kid who should go far in life," said Hunter's GED teacher, Cindy Robinett. "Being able to watch him succeed is one reason I love my job."

With tuition assistance from the Arkansas Workforce Center, Hunter began college classes at BRTC in Fall 2018. He is currently enrolled in the Auto Collision Repair program with Butch Dail. He continues to work for the City of Pocahontas after school, working as many hours as he can. "Hunter is an outstanding student," said Instructor Butch Dail. "He's here very early for class and has never missed. He's very dedicated and eager to learn. I can show him something one time and he knows how to do it."

Robinett said today many young people need more mentoring than they used to: "We often see kids who don't realize how important a good work ethic is, how important first impressions are, and how priceless an education is." Hunter demonstrates this ethic. "Not only is Hunter a hard worker," Dail said, "but he's always looking for extra work if his hours are low with the City. He doesn't like to sit still, so he's always busy." Both Robinett and Dail agree: students like Hunter make teaching a joy.

The BRTC Adult Education program has class sites in Pocahontas, Walnut Ridge, Paragould, and Corning. For more information, call (870) 248-4130 or visit [www.blackrivertech.org/community](http://www.blackrivertech.org/community). For more information about BRTC's Auto Collision Repair program, call (870) 248-4160 or visit <http://www.blackrivertech.org/academics/technical-programs>.

## Dietary Manager's Program Now Available 100% Online!

To address the projected demand for dietary managers, BRTC is offering its 1-year technical certificate in Nutrition and Foodservice Management completely online. The dietary managers program is accredited by the Association of Nutrition and Foodservice Professionals. Because Arkansas will be changing the registered dietitian program into a 4-year program instead of the past 2-year program, individuals interested in beginning a career in dietetics can use the dietary manager's program as a step into a 4-year program.

Graduates of the 1-year dietary manager's program can easily find employment at school and hospital cafeterias, in foodservice, and as assistants to registered dietitians at clinical sites. Certified dietary managers often make between \$36,000 and \$45,000 per year. For more information, contact Christina Derbes at (870) 248-4168.



Hunter Medlock



## BRTC Adjunct Instructor Shares Love of Medieval Period with Walnut Ridge High School Seniors and Staff

On December 1, BRTC history adjunct instructor Roy Carroll (*standing, right*) shared his love of the Medieval period with more than 60 Walnut Ridge High School seniors and several faculty members in partnership with English teacher Tracy Hallman.

Students dressed up in Medieval garb and attended a Medieval feast. During the feast, students performed a boast which they had written. The feast is part of a unit on the Medieval period during which students study important Medieval works such as *Beowulf* and *Canterbury Tales*.

Carroll, a member of Society Creative Anachronism (SCA) which is the United States' largest Medieval organization, brings several pieces of his Medieval jewelry, clothing, and armor reproductions for students to view. He also shares information about living in the Medieval period and helps students understand the Medieval social structure including the nobility, church, and peasants. He also teaches about Medieval European warfare.



## 3rd Annual BRTC Day of Caring Gives Toys to 303 Children



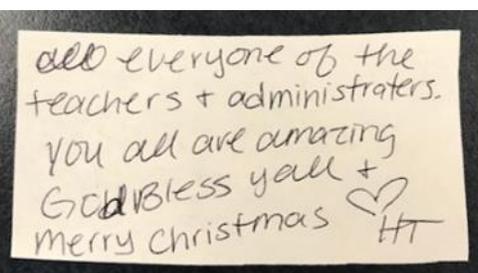
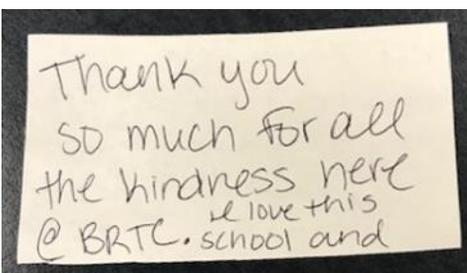
Elizabeth Collins, SGA member Casey Strowmat man the table while a student signs up for a bicycle in Paragould

For the 3rd year, the BRTC Day of Caring, in partnership with BRTC's Student Government Association (SGA) and faculty and staff, provided toys to BRTC students' children. Many BRTC students struggle to put food on the table and go to school, so Christmas can be a burden for those with children.

Thanks to SGA and faculty organizers Elizabeth Collins (Paragould) and Lisa Inman (Pocahontas), Christmas just became a lot jollier! Over 300 children of BRTC students will receive toys purchased by SGA funds.

Currently enrolled BRTC students were able to choose a toy for each of their children; 116 BRTC students participated in the event.

In addition, a bicycle was given away at each location. BRTC's Priscilla Stillwell and Vickie French each donated a new bicycle. Winners were Jordan Agee and Shellee Hollis.



# community

## □ Paragould Classes

Contact Alan at (870) 239-0969 or visit [blackrivertech.org/community/](http://blackrivertech.org/community/) for more information!

## Conversational Spanish for Everyday Life

January 8-March 5, 2019  
Tuesdays at 5:30 -7:00 p.m.  
\$175 per person  
No experience necessary!

## □ Pocahontas Classes

Past classes include the following workshops:



Holiday Wreath Class



Farmhouse Tree Class

Contact Cally at (870) 248-4182 or visit [blackrivertech.org/community/](http://blackrivertech.org/community/) for more information!



Preston Rowe won the Fall 2018 Marketing Survey \$50 Visa card! Rowe is pictured with BRTC's Ann Savage.

## Want to Travel to Scotland in 2020?

Courtney and Dr. Derek Clements, BRTC faculty, are leading a college and community trip to Scotland June 11-18, 2020. The trip is open to BRTC students and employees as well as community members.

Among the sites visited will be Stirling Castle, Loch Ness, and Culloden Moor, site of the final battle of the Jacobite uprising against England. The



trip cost through December 20, 2018, is \$4,229. Currently enrolled BRTC students will also have \$500 paid by the Student Government Association. Payment plans are available.

For the itinerary or more information, contact Courtney

## First 'Tis the Season Hometown Holiday Showcase a Huge Success!

On Saturday, December 1, BRTC Corporate and Community Education hosted the first annual 'Tis the Season Hometown Holiday Showcase. Located in the Randolph County Development Center, it was a fun day of hometown holiday shopping. Forty-five local vendors and businesses brought in over 500 shoppers!



Shoppers at the Holiday Showcase

Vendors offered local crafts, art, jewelry, vinyl designs, home décor, and more. Many vendors are local artisans with limited access to customers. The event was free to the public and door prizes were given away. Booth rental proceeds will be donated to the local backpack programs. BRTC thanks shoppers and vendors for their support!

Below are just a few of the local vendors who participated in the Showcase. *From right to left:* The Vintage Touch by Sharon McCullar, Baltz Custom Builds by Scott and Janie Baltz, Studio 870 by Natalie Slusser and Becky Bradley





## BRTC Season of Sharing

BRTC's Season of Sharing raised money and food for the BRTC Food Pantry. The event at Paragould offered pictures with Santa and Mrs. Clause to the public. The Paragould and Pocahontas community were both invited to sit in a sleigh and take pictures.



Church member Debbie Steimel presents check to Neal Harwell

All proceeds were donated to the Pantry.

## First United Methodist Church Donation

Pocahontas' First United Methodist Church donated to the BRTC Food Pantry.

## Mayor Speaks to Students

Pocahontas mayor Kary Story spoke to Darendra Kersey's Principles of Supervision class on November 27. As the supervisor of 54-120 full and part-time employees, Mayor Story shared information about current class topics: hands-on management, leading by example, resolving conflict, decision-making, the importance of communication, budgeting, and being fair, firm, and consistent.



## Former BRTC Student Shares History

Former student Michael Seacrest generously displayed his collection of World War II memorabilia at the BRTC Library for two weeks in recognition



of National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.

Thank you, Michael!

## □ New Scholarship

### Catfish Farmers of Arkansas Scholarship

- \$1,000 fall
- \$1,000 spring

### ProMed EMT Scholarship

- \$1,000

### ProMed Paramedic Scholarship

- \$2,000

Visit [www.blackrivertech.edu](http://www.blackrivertech.edu) and click on Scholarships!

If you are interested in starting a new scholarship, contact Karen Liebhaber at (870) 248-4015. For questions about applying, call (870) 248-4017.

## New Employee Here for You!



Zac DeClerk

### IT Manager-SIS Support

Hometown: Pocahontas  
 Location: Pocahontas  
 Education: Arkansas State University, BS



## Raven Randolph Attends 5th Annual ACC Student Leadership Academy

BRTC student Raven Randolph was 1 of 60 community college students statewide who attended the 5th annual Arkansas Community College (ACC) Student Leadership Academy in Little Rock in November.

Students participate in interactive sessions, group projects, and networking activities related to topics such as leadership ethics, communication, team-building, social media etiquette, and more.

Raven is the first BRTC student to attend the ACC Student Leadership Academy.

## Electrical Classes Celebrate National Apprenticeship Week (NAW)

Each year, the U.S. Department of Labor hosts a National Apprenticeship week. For 2018, November 12 began the start of the event. National Apprenticeship Week (NAW) is a national celebration which provides community industries and leaders with the opportunity to demonstrate their support for apprenticeship. NAW also allows sponsors to display their programs, facilities and needs for apprentices. The focus of the weeklong event highlights the benefits of apprenticeships.



Monday evening, the Electrical Apprenticeship Year 1 class, led by instructor Mark Graftenreed, met and welcomed guest speaker, John Newberry. Newberry shared his employment needs, experiences, and advice with the students as well as industry expectations after students completing the program. Tuesday evening, the Electrical Apprenticeship classes for years 2, 3 & 4, led by instructor Dennis Gregory, welcomed guest speakers Linda from Orscheln's and Roger Knight from Paragould Light, Water, and Cable (PLWC). As a representative from Orscheln's, Linda spoke about the services and supplies available for electricians. Knight spoke to his experiences with the program as well as what electricians encounter at PLWC.



## HOW YOU CAN HELP

### Want to Offer an Internship or Apprenticeship to a BRTC Student?

Many BRTC students are hard workers looking to go to school while they work. Others go to school only part-time so they can work to support their families. Still others simply want the opportunity to get experience before they enter the job market.

To set up an internship or apprenticeship, contact Priscilla Stillwell, (870) 239-0969 at the Paragould location or Karen Liebhaber (870) 248-4185 at Pocahontas.

# BRTC MISSION STATEMENT

Black River Technical College transforms lives through quality academic and career education to enhance the community we serve.

## INSIGHT With Dr. Jan Ziegler

BLACK RIVER TECH

I am writing this message at the conclusion of a trip. This is not just any old trip, and it certainly is not a vacation. Today is a long anticipated trip to Chicago with a team of three others from BRTC to attend a special hearing meeting with the Higher Learning Commission.

The purpose of the hearing: a committee of our peers met with us to consider and recommend our accreditation status going forward. This committee of six will be making its recommendation to the HLC Board by the end of December. Their recommendation to remove our current probation status and place us on the "Standard Pathway" is the outcome we at BRTC hope to and believe we should receive. The decision will be announced around March 1.

The entire college community has worked extremely hard since BRTC was placed on probationary status over one and one-half years ago. Our shortcomings, primarily in assessment of student learning, in strategic planning, and in lack of shared governance, did not mean that students at

*"Our success—  
and yours—  
is at the center of  
all we do."*

the past several years of transition and the uncertainty that often accompany change, BRTC had come to see survival as success. That simply is not the case.

We are emerging, we believe, a much stronger and better college. We are more than a college characterized by survival. We are a place where continuous improvement at the highest level is our quest. Our success – and yours – is at the center of all we do.



BRTC were not receiving a good education nor that they were not mastering marketable skills and earning valuable credentials and degrees. Our identified shortfalls suggested that BRTC was failing to engage in data-driven decision making; we were failing to pursue continuous improvement.

We were doing a good job, but we were not always focused and intentional in the pursuit of excellence. During

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[BlackRiverTech.edu](http://BlackRiverTech.edu)

### Newsletter Staff:

Karen Liebhaber  
Ann Savage  
Shawna Lepard  
Holly Looney

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Make a Gift in Honor of those special to you!

Your memorial or in-honor gift supports student scholarships, academic programs, even the emergency fund!

