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# The River's Edge

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## Enrollment Tops 2,200; Sets New Records

It's official. According to the "snapshot" day reporting figures, Black River Technical College enrollment has surged to 2,245 students, an increase of 18% over the previous fall numbers and an all-time record for the college. The report submitted to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education also shows that for the first time since becoming a two-year college, the majority of students are considered "traditional," or those under age 25.

Another record in this fall's figures is the significant growth at the Paragould campus, where 691 students are attending all or part of their classes. This number represents a growth of nearly 48% over the previous fall's enrollment. It also reflects yet another record: more than 40% of BRTC's students are attending one or more of their classes on the Paragould campus.

College officials attribute at least part of the phenomenal Paragould growth to the opening of a new Academic Complex there. The new complex includes a science lab,

making possible for the first time the completion of an entire Associate of Arts degree on the Paragould campus.



*Students utilize the lounge area of the new Academic Complex on the Paragould campus.*

Other factors in the overall growth are likely tied to the economy, believes BRTC President Richard Gaines. "Historically, people enroll in college in greater numbers when we have economic downturns," he noted.

*(Continued on page 3)*

### Important Dates

September 15

*Alumni Fish Fry*

October 2

*Annual IBERIABANK/BRTC Foundation Golf Tournament*

October 21-22

*Holocaust Survivor Presentations*

October 27

*BRTC Advisory Dinner*

November 8

*Phi Theta Kappa Blood Drive*

## IBERIABANK *fsb* Continues Support of Richard and Patti Gaines Scholarship

Officials of IBERIABANK *fsb* continue their funding support of the Richard and Patti Gaines Scholarship program at Black River Technical College with another \$10,000 donation, presented last week by Vice President Kevin Rose.

"IBERIABANK is pleased to make this donation to the Richard and Patti Gaines Scholarship fund in honor of their lifelong commitment to education," Rose said. "With record enrollment at BRTC this fall, we recognize the critical need for support. We are honored to continue providing support to the BRTC Foundation and its commitment to quality education."



*Kevin Rose (far right), VP of IBERIABANK, presents Richard and Patti Gaines with a donation to the Gaines Scholarship Fund.*

The scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 are awarded each semester to full-time students seeking a degree or certificate at BRTC. Since its inception four years ago, 66 scholarships have been awarded through the Richard and Patti Gaines Scholarship fund.

"Patti and I are extremely grateful to IBERIABANK for their continued support of the college and this scholarship

program," said President Gaines. "Their generosity provides many opportunities for our students."

For more information on the Gaines Scholarship program, go to the Financial Aid link of the BRTC website at <http://finaid.blackrivertech.edu/>.

# Aviation Maintenance Technology Purchases New Equipment

Black River Technical College's Aviation Maintenance Technology Program recently purchased a fully operational and flight capable Piper 23-250 Aztec plane as part of a \$2.9 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. The grant was given to the two-year colleges comprising Arkansas' Aerospace Training Consortium and is expected to be used in supporting the development and expansion of Aerospace Industry skills training over the next three years, according to the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges (AATYC) Web site.



*Piper 23-250 Aztec purchased for the Aviation Program.*

"The plane will be beneficial to the students," BRTC Vice President of Academics Jack McCord said. "This plane is not to fly but for students to experiment and work with the retractable landing gear."

The \$24,000 plane, purchased in Clinton, was delivered to the BRTC campus August 28. The twin engine plane with retractable landing gear will be essential in future instruction for the program, Scott Casady, Aviation Maintenance Technology Instructor, said. "Our students are now going to get runway taxi experience. This plane is also a major benefit in considering the twin engine aircraft system; there is a big difference between one engine versus two engines."

"This is the first aircraft for the school that is fully operational and flight capable," Casady added. "It also helps us meet the requirements for continued operation under Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) guidelines."

With additional funds left, Casady said he has

been approved to purchase an additional plane as well as other equipment such as scales and a video bore scope.

Black River Technical College was one of eight two-year colleges to receive funding from this grant.

In conjunction with the grant, the colleges and several partner Aerospace/Aviation industries pledged more than \$1.7 million in matching in-kind funds.



*Aviation Tech students, Matt Propst (left) and Tim Brackin, get hands-on experience with the Piper.*

## Pathways Incentive Money Used to Furnish Computer Lab



*Director Tom Baker (right) looks on as Steve Williams and Mike Greene of BRTC's Computer Services Department install new equipment in the Pathways computer lab.*

The Career Pathways Program at BRTC recently received over \$75,000 of incentive money, which was used for the purchase of new computer furniture and other items that are utilized by students in the Career Pathways Program, according to Director Tom Baker.

The incentive money is awarded annually to programs that meet or exceed goals set by the state for the Career Pathways Programs. Factors that determine funding include enrollment, completion rates, rate of employment after students complete the program, and number of new students, just to name a few.

Computers along with computer desks, chairs and holders have been purchased for the Pathways computer lab used by Pathway's students for career readiness testing, Compass testing, and for general online access and coursework. Equipment has also been purchased for the computer lab in the Education building because Pathways' students utilize that facility as well.

"The staff has worked hard to meet and exceed the performance measures set by the state," said Baker. "We are able to better serve our students with the incentive money, and that would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of the Career Pathways staff."

## New Employees at BRTC

Margaret Manning of Pocahontas and Sandra Williams of Corning are the newest additions to the BRTC faculty and staff.

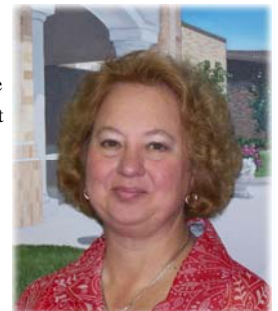


*Margaret Manning*

Manning has been hired as Food Preparation Specialist for the cafeteria at BRTC. She worked at Waterloo for twelve years until its closing, at which time she enrolled at BRTC and earned an AAS degree in Dietetics and graduated this past May. She fills the position left vacant by the recent move of Sandra Parker into the position of Food Preparation Coordinator.

Williams has been hired as a full-time Developmental Education Instructor at the BRTC-Paragould campus. She has been teaching at BRTC as an adjunct instructor for the past five years, and for the past two years as a full-time, temporary instructor.

Williams holds a BSE degree from Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa, and an MSE degree from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia.



*Sandra Williams*

## Gaines Scholarship Recipients Announced for Fall 2009



*Amber Britton*



*Freda Annette Eubanks*



*Jennifer A. King*



*Terri Milburn*



*Crystal Reed*



*Christy Robertson*



*Jamie Swift*



*Ana Williams*

Recipients of the Richard and Patti Gaines' Scholarship for the Fall 2009 semester are Ginger Britton, Freda Annette Eubanks, Jennifer A. King, Terri Milburn, Crystal Reed, Christy Robertson, Jamie Swift, and Ana Williams.

Each student is awarded \$1,000 for the semester provided they are enrolled full time and pursuing a degree or certificate from BRTC.

Britton resides in Walnut Ridge and is pursuing a degree in Nursing. She is the mother of Tel and Makenzie Britton. Eubanks, daughter of Barbara and the late Alvin Eubanks, resides in Pocahontas with her three children and plans to earn an Associate of Applied Science degree in EMT/Paramedics. She attended high school at Delaplaine.

King, of Paragould, is the daughter of Jimmy and Cathy Boyles. She attended high school in Doniphan, Missouri, and her plans are to pursue a

degree in Accounting and eventually earn certification as a CPA.

Milburn is a 1995 graduate of Hoxie High School and is currently enrolled in the Practical Nursing Program. Reed is a Corning High School graduate who plans to complete the Registered Nursing Program. Robertson, of Jonesboro, also plans to complete the Practical Nursing Program.

Swift, the daughter of Judy and Darryl Everett, is taking general education courses with plans of transferring to a four-year college to pursue a BSE in Middle-Level Education. She is a graduate of Red Oak High School in Red Oak, Texas, and currently resides in Hoxie with her husband.

Williams, of Jonesboro, is a graduate of Nettleton High School and is enrolled in the respiratory therapy program. She is the daughter of Leigh Ann Tinsley and Ralph Guilliams.

## Additional Scholarships Awarded

Holly Reed of Pocahontas and Michael Stauffer of Brookland have each been awarded scholarships to attend BRTC.

Reed, a graduate of Pocahontas High School, has been awarded a BRTC Foundation Scholarship in General Education for the 2009-2010 school year.

She is the daughter of Don and Patty Reed. Her plans are to obtain an education in Business Management and some day open her own hotel.

Stauffer received the Academic Distinction Scholarship, which is renewable for up to two years provided the minimum requirements are met each semester.

A graduate of Brookland High School, Stauffer plans to study sociology and pursue a degree in Law Enforcement. He is the son of Kim and Jerry Smith.



*Holly Reed*



*Michael Stauffer*

## Enrollment

(Cont'd from Page 1)

"Whatever the reasons," he added, "BRTC is pleased that students are choosing us as their college in pursuing their degrees, and that so far, we have been able to meet the demand. We continue to look to the future and to seek various funding opportunities in the face of increasing enrollment and declining or flat revenues from the state. We appreciate the support of the community in our continued growth."

## Fish Fry to Kick Off Alumni Association

The Black River Technical College Alumni Association will be hosting a fish fry next Tuesday, September 15, from 6-7 p.m. in the Banquet Room of the RCDC building on the Pocahontas campus. This event is to encourage all former students and graduates of BRTC to join the alumni association.

"This event will kick-off the alumni association," said Alumni Association Coordinator Rhonda Foster said. "We want everyone who attended BRTC and has completed a three-hour course at one of the BRTC campuses to attend the fish fry." Along with the fish fry, the Kimbrough Choir will perform several songs.

Photograph arrangements of the college - past and present - will also be on display for those wanting to see what the campus started out as and what it has become today.

Students who have completed at least one three-hour credit course from BRTC are eligible to join the Alumni Association. For more information, visit the Alumni Association link under the Office of Development on the BRTC website at [www.blackrivertech.org](http://www.blackrivertech.org).

Those wishing to attend the fish fry need to R.S.V.P. to Foster at 870-248-4000, ext. 4157, or [Rhonda.foster@blackrivertech.org](mailto:Rhonda.foster@blackrivertech.org).

# Black River Technical College

P.O. Box 468

1410 Hwy 304 East

Pocahontas, AR 72455

P.O. Box 1565

1 Black River Drive

Paragould, AR 72450

Phone: 870-248-4000

Phone: 870-239-0969

Fax: 870-248-4100

Fax: 870-239-2050

Website: [www.blackrivertech.edu](http://www.blackrivertech.edu)

## 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  
Office of Development.*

*[janz@blackrivertech.org](mailto:janz@blackrivertech.org)*

*[annf@blackrivertech.org](mailto:annf@blackrivertech.org)*

*[dina.bufstedler@blackrivertech.org](mailto:dina.bufstedler@blackrivertech.org)*

*[amber.ballard@blackrivertech.org](mailto:amber.ballard@blackrivertech.org)*

*[rhonda.foster@blackrivertech.org](mailto:rhonda.foster@blackrivertech.org)*

### On-Line Application Address:

<http://connect.blackrivertech.org/nappadm.html>



## Campus Commentary



*Dr. Michael Sullens*

*VP for Student Services*

BRTC has reached another milestone in the history of the institution with a record enrollment of over 2200 students for the fall semester. BRTC shows increased numbers both in Pocahontas and Paragould.

The new growth can be attributed in part to President Barack Obama's statement concerning the importance of the two-year college system and recognition that the vast number of jobs do not require a four year degree. President Obama emphasizes

the importance of education and its impact on the prosperity of any community or state.

The economy has also impacted the enrollment growth in the two-year colleges across the state. Parents realize that their child can obtain a high-quality education at a lesser tuition cost and not incur the additional expenses of a four-year institution, such as housing, for the first two years.

The new growth at BRTC has brought with it new challenges which were met by each division within the institution. The challenge that the Student Services division faced and will continue to face is time. The financial aid department worked extended hours for three weeks to process aid for the students. Several students waited before filing aid applications because some had not decided if they would enroll in college until the last minute. Because of the delay in filing, the Financial Aid Department was on a time re-

## 16th Annual IBERIABANK/BRTC Foundation Golf Tournament Friday, October 2, 2009

straint to process the aid before the drop-for-nonpayment date.

Likewise, the Registrar's office went to extended hours for updating the students' files. The updating ensures that all documents have been submitted and the registration information field is completed so that financial aid can be awarded. Everyone in Student Services worked extended hours to accommodate the increased enrollment. The Advisement, Retention, and Pathways departments arrived early and stayed late to ensure that the students were receiving the services needed to complete their enrollment process.

And with the new growth, BRTC, for the first time, has more traditional than nontraditional students (25 and older) enrolled. In the past, the nontraditional student number was

higher than the traditional student number. The trend has reversed and now fifty-two percent of the students enrolled are traditional students.

Once again, this is tied to the economy and the cost of attendance, which has greatly impacted the Paragould campus. BRTC has seen a tremendous increase in Paragould enrollment with the completion of the new academic complex. Enrollment numbers in Paragould have increased forty-seven percent over last fall.

Recognition of the efforts to accommodate this large enrollment goes to everyone at BRTC. Without the joint effort of all individuals to process this large number of students, the task could not have been accomplished.