

December 16, 2014  
Volume 12, Issue 11



Inside this issue:

<i>Respiratory Care Pinning and Graduation</i>	2
<i>Graduation (Cont'd. Pg. 1)</i>	2
<i>Air Ambulances visit Paragould Campus</i>	2
<i>BRTC Phi Theta Kappa Inducts 23 Members</i>	2
<i>LETA Holds Class 2014-B Graduation</i>	3
<i>Personnel Announcements</i>	3
<i>Fun Before Finals Photo Collage</i>	3
<i>PACE hires Career Counselor</i>	4
<i>Student Chosen to Travel Italy for Free</i>	4

## Winter Commencement

Winter Commencement was held Thursday, December 11 in the Randolph County Development Center. BRTC awarded more than 40 degrees and certificates to 283 graduates. Some students completed more than one certificate and an additional 43 individuals received the GED. Separate commencement ceremonies were held for nursing, respiratory, and law enforcement graduates.

Degrees were conferred by BRTC President Dr. Eric Turner and awarded by Vice President for Technical Education Angie Caldwell and Vice President for General Education Dr. Roger Johnson. Degrees awarded included two-year Associate of Arts, Associate of Business, and Associate of Applied Science degrees as well as one-year technical certificates, one-semester certificates of proficiency, and GEDs.

Tina Morrison, candidate for the Associate of Applied Science in Business Technology, Accounting, served as graduate candidate spokesperson. She expressed her appreciation of the individual attention she and her classmates received from BRTC faculty and staff, and encouraged her classmates to keep working and always do a good job.

Alumnus Mark Nichols served as keynote speaker.

He related his mother's experience of attending college while a single mother to the many hardships that the 2014 graduates themselves had faced, reminding graduates that they will



Mark Nichols

reap the benefits of their hard work, just as his mother had. "Hard work," he said, "is a good thing...designed for our good." Through his own story of beginning college in developmental math to completing his bachelor in engineering, he reminded graduates that their hard work, sacrifice, and "diligence will be rewarded."

Nichols graduated from the University of Arkansas—Fayetteville College of Engineering with a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering and is currently Traffic Operations Engineer for the city of Jonesboro. He is married to Pocahontas native Stephanie DeClerk Nichols.

### Important Dates

**December 24-January 2**  
**Campus Closed**  
**January 10**  
**Spring Classes Begin**  
**January 16**  
**Foundation Board Mtg.**  
**January 19**  
**Martin Luther King, Jr., Day—No Classes**  
**January 30**  
**Serendipity**  
**March 7**  
**Gala**

## Registered & Practical Nursing Graduation



Judy Haney

Seventeen students received a technical certificate in Practical Nursing; 38 received their Associate of Applied Science degree in Registered Nursing. Judy Haney, the Chief Nursing Officer at Harris Hospital, was the guest

speaker. Haney graduated from BRTC's LPN program in 1978. She told the graduates, "Blessings come in disguise, so make sure you are watching for them." Joanne Smith, president of the PN class, challenged classmates to be outspoken. "Speak for our patients when they can't speak for themselves," Smith urged. Brandi Mays was the 2014 RN class representative.

The following PN awards were presented: Perfect Attendance—Vanessa Cox, Stephanie Downing, and RoseAnn Thomason; Professionalism Award—Stephanie Downing, Heather Lindsey, Angie Skimahorn, and RoseAnn Thomason; Community Service Award—Stephanie Downing; Best Simulation Nurse—Cabrinn Morgan; Best Medical Surgical Nurse—Angie Skimahorn; Highest Overall Average, IV Therapy—Angie Skimahorn; Community Service Award—Joanne Smith; Highest Overall Average (Pharmacology, Nursing I,

and pinning ceremony for Black River Technical College's Practical Nursing and Registered Nursing students held on December 9.

Seventeen students received a technical certificate in Practical Nursing; 38 received their Associate of Applied Science degree in Registered Nursing. Judy Haney, the Chief Nursing Officer at Harris Hospital, was the guest

(Continued on pg. 2)

# Respiratory Care Pinning and Graduation

Nineteen students received the Associate of Applied Science degree in Respiratory Care in a pinning and graduation ceremony on December 8 in the Randolph County Development Center.

Dr. Eric Turner, president of Black River Technical College, welcomed graduates and their guests. He congratulated them on the work they had done leading up to this moment. Graduates had logged 800 clinical hours.

The Academic Excellence Award went to Megan Koller. Delia McLain was given the Clinical Excellence Award. This year another award was created, "The Against All Odds" Award, which went to Deborah Exum for perseverance and academic excellence during the recent illness of her son, Jon. The Preceptor of the Year Award went to NEA Baptist therapist Jeff Halbert.

Brett Vinson, Director of Respiratory Care at St. Bernard's Medical Center, was the graduation speaker. He is an alumni of BRTC's Respiratory Care program and spoke about how well his time at BRTC prepared him.

A reception was held following graduation thanks to the donations of Kroger, Price Chopper, Subway, Taco Casa, and Walmart.



Deborah Exum with instructors Jessica Alphin (left and Suzette Hicks (right.)

# Graduation (Cont'd. Pg. 1)

Nursing II, and Nursing III)—RoseAnn Thomason; Florence Nightingale—RoseAnn Thomason; Best Geriatric Nurse—Leah Weaver.

The following RN awards were presented: Highest Average, Nursing Process III—Josh Baker; Leadership Award—Angela Brasfield; Florence Nightingale—Debbie Cline and Cheri Walker; Best Obstetrical Nurse—Kelley Hardin; Faculty Choice award—Kelsey Henderson; Best Medical Surgical Nurse—Kelsey Henderson; Highest Average, Nursing Process I and Highest Average, Nursing Process II—Brandi Mays; Best Critical Care Nurse—Dustye Swindle; Perfect Attendance—Logan Waddell.

A reception was held following the ceremony courtesy of Harris Hospital, Randolph County Nursing Home, St. Bernard's Medical Center, and Pinnacle Frames.

# Air Ambulances visit Paragould Campus

On November 10 Air Evac Lifeteam from Paragould came to the Black River Technical College's Paragould Campus to allow EMT students to have a first-hand experience with the air ambulance.

Earlier in the semester students were able to tour Survival Flight's air ambulance. Patricia Sanderson encouraged Lisa Cothorn, Paragould's EMT instructor, to get Survival Flight on campus. Sanderson said, "It's great for students to get more exposure to air ambulances and to see the differences in air crafts."

Students were able to talk to the flight crew, get inside the air ambulance, ask questions, and practice loading and unloading into the air craft. Cothorn realizes that most of her students will not work on an air ambulance. Cothorn said, "I want the students to be able to see the helicopter up close because even as an EMT on the ground they will be around this."



# BRTC Phi Theta Kappa Inducts 23 Members

On November 10, Black River Technical College's Beta Delta Phi chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, the 2-year college international honor society, inducted twenty-three new members. In order to be considered for admission into Phi Theta Kappa, students must have completed at least twelve credit hours and have maintained a minimum 3.5 grade point average.



(back row) Ashley Hall, advisor; Tina Morrison, Vice President of Leadership; Jonathan Dunnam; Kaylan Hutsell; Amber Pentecost; Makenna Budding; Erica Johnston; Benjamin Congill; Kyle Sample; Adam Ransone, President; TommyShawn Long, advisor.

(front row) Becky Pentecost; Janine Mitchell; Sarah Henson; Brittany Rowland; and Mackenzie Davis..

Phi Theta Kappa membership centers around cultivating the hallmarks of scholarship, leadership, fellowship, and service. Members study an honors topic, currently Frontiers and the Spirit of Exploration, then develop it into an Honors in Action project. This year, BRTC students studied advancements in cancer research and held a Color War to raise money for a cancer research.

Phi Theta Kappa members also worked with BRTC's administration to develop a college project which focused on encouraging students to complete their two-year degree or certificate. In Pocahontas on November 18 and in Paragould on November 19, members held Chili Cook-Offs.

# LETA Holds Class 2014-B Graduation

On Friday, November 14 Law Enforcement Training Academy at Black River Technical College held graduation in the Randolph County Development Center for class 2014-B which is the largest class to graduate from the academy.

Graduates were challenged by speaker J.R. Hankins, a retired major with the Arkansas State Police, to do the best job possible to serve their citizens. With 31 years of experience in the Arkansas State Police, Hankins fully understands what graduates will face on the job.

Joshua Evans of the Mountain Home Police Department was chosen by his classmates to serve as spokesperson. Evans cautioned his classmates to not try to be a hero but to make a difference.

Recipient of the Top Overall award, the cadet with the highest overall average in academics, firearms, and physical fitness, was Karen Rinehart of the Jonesboro Police Department. Rinehart is the first female officer to receive this award. Evan Austin of the Arkansas Highway Police received the Top Academic Award, Ethan McGinnis of the Greene County Sheriff's Office won the Top Shooter award, and Lloyd Norman of the Blytheville Police Department and Cory Jameson Medley of the Jonesboro Police Department tied for the Top Physical Training award.

This graduation celebrated BRTC's Law Enforcement Training Academy's



Officers taking oath of office.

31st class of law enforcement graduates. To date BRTC has trained 1404 officers. During a 13-week course, officers were instructed in standard police tactics, firearms, legal, educational, technical skills, and practical exercises. Each officer had to maintain an academic score of at least 70% on each examination and have fired consistently at least 80% of the time during firearms training to have successfully complete all phases of the course.

## Personnel Announcements

Martha Nelson, Vice President of Student Affairs, announced a change in position as well as a new hire in her department.



Ashley Conrey

Ashley Conrey of Pocahontas has been hired as the Financial Aid Analyst. Since January of 2013 Conrey has been the Administrative Specialist I in the Department of Student Services. Previously, she worked at Riverside Express as an assistant manager and at Custom Pak in Walnut Ridge.



Carol Mullins

Conrey received an Associate of Arts degree in 2004 and the certificate of proficiency in phlebotomy in 2011, both from BRTC. She is currently working towards her interdisciplinary bachelor's degree at UALR.

Carol Mullins of Pocahontas has been hired as the Administrative Specialist I in the Office of Student Affairs.

Mullins graduated from Palm Beach Gardens High School and received her Associate of Business from Technical College of the Low Country in Beaufort, South Carolina, in 1993. Before coming to work at BRTC she was employed at Vitronic Promotional Group in Doniphan, Missouri, for six and a half years.

**Fun Before Finals**



P.O. Box 468  
1410 Hwy 304 East  
Pocahontas, AR 72455

Phone: 870-248-4000  
Fax: 870-248-4100

P.O. Box 1565  
1 Black River Drive  
Paragould, AR 72450

Phone: 870-239-0969  
Fax: 870-239-2050

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

Online River's Edge Address:  
[http://www.blackrivertech.org/rivers\\_edge/](http://www.blackrivertech.org/rivers_edge/)

*The River's Edge is produced by the  
Office of Development.*

*[jessica.bailey@blackrivertech.edu](mailto:jessica.bailey@blackrivertech.edu)  
[karenl@blackrivertech.edu](mailto:karenl@blackrivertech.edu)  
[anns@blackrivertech.edu](mailto:anns@blackrivertech.edu)  
[shawna.lepard@blackrivertech.edu](mailto:shawna.lepard@blackrivertech.edu)*

### *BRTC Mission Statement*

*Blending tradition, technology and innovation  
to educate today's diverse students  
for tomorrow's changing world.*

## PACE hires Career Counselor



*Neal Harwell*

Neal Harwell of Pocahontas has been hired through the Path to Accelerated Completion and Employment (PACE) grant as part-time Career Counselor at Black River Technical College.

Harwell will provide career guidance for students through assorted services. He provides personality and interest inventories for students who are not sure what direction they want to go. Students wanting assistance with interviewing techniques as well as

resume development can also gain help from Harwell. He is available to help all students.

Originally from Little Rock Harwell received his BS in Psychology from University of Arkansas at Little Rock in 1995 and his Masters in Counseling from Henderson State University in 1999. He is a licensed professional counselor. He worked as an Academic Advisor and Career Counselor at HSU. He then moved to Pocahontas and has worked for Families, Inc., for the past 7 years. He has also worked as an adjunct at BRTC for the past 3 years.

His office is on the Pocahontas Campus in the Academic Learning Center, TM106. His office hours are posted. You can also reach him at 870-248-4158 or email him at [neal.harwell@blackrivertech.edu](mailto:neal.harwell@blackrivertech.edu).

## Student Chosen to Travel Italy for Free

BRTC's Student Government Association (SGA) provided funding for two randomly chosen BRTC graduates to attend a trip to Italy in Spring 2016, one chosen from December graduation and one from Spring 2015 graduation. The December winner was Mackenzie Hibbs.

Hibbs and the Spring 2015 winner will join a group of 51 travelers scheduled to visit Florence, Pisa, Assisi, and Rome, Italy, over Spring Break 2016. Highlights of the trip will include the Leaning Tower of Pisa, St. Francis of Assisi Basilica, Vatican City, the Colosseum, and the Pantheon. Tour planner and leader Dr. Sandy Baltz stated, "This is an unbelievable opportunity for our students to enjoy a trip overseas. The SGA has been amazing to provide assistance for so many, and to these two graduates it will be a dream come true. How many individuals can say they toured Italy for free?"



*Mackenzie Hibbs*