

August 14, 2015  
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**Important Dates**

**August 15**  
**REACH Sites Open**  
**9am-12pm**

**August 17-21**  
**Inservice**

**August 24**  
**Fall Semester Begins**

**September 7**  
**Labor Day-Campuses Closed**

**September 12**  
**REACH Sites Open**

**October 2**  
**Annual IBERIABANK / BRTC Foundation Golf Tournament**

## BRTC Named a "2015 Great College to Work For"

Black River Technical College is one of the best colleges in the nation to work for, according to a new survey by The Chronicle of Higher Education, the nation's best source of news about colleges and universities.

The results, released in The Chronicle's eighth annual report on the Academic Workplace, are based on a survey of 281 colleges and universities.

In all, only 86 of the 281 institutions achieved "Great College to Work For" recognition for specific best practices and policies. Results are reported for small, medium, and large institutions with Black River Technical College included among the universities and colleges with 2,999 students or fewer.

Black River Technical College won honors in following 3 categories: Work-Life Balance, Supervisor/Department Chair Relationship, and Confidence in Senior Leadership.

Even more impressive, BRTC was the only 2-year college in Arkansas to receive the honor and, with John Brown University, was 1 of 2 Arkansas institutions to achieve the honor.

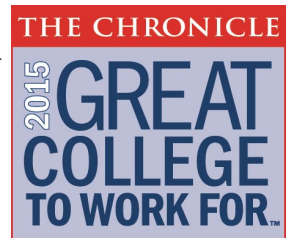
"This is a very satisfying affirmation of Black River Technical College, but our real goal is not recognition –

it's being a community that values the needs and contributions of every individual. In that sense everyone at BRTC helps to make this a great place to work," said Dr. Eric Turner, BRTC President.

"The institutions that the Great Colleges program recognizes provide innovative educational experiences – while also offering their employees outstanding workplace experiences – and we are eager to help readers learn more about them," said Liz McMillen, The Chronicle's editor.

The survey results are based on a two-part assessment process: an institutional audit that captured demographics and workplace policies from each institution, and a survey administered to faculty, administrators, and professional support staff. The primary factor in deciding whether an institution received recognition was the employee feedback.

The Chronicle worked with ModernThink LLC to administer the survey and analyze the results. Great Colleges to Work For is one of the largest and most respected workplace-recognition programs in the country.



## Collins Appointed by Hutchinson to BOT

Carolyn Collins of Paragould has been appointed by Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson to a 7 year term on the Board of Trustees at Black River Technical College.

"I am honored to have been appointed by Governor Asa Hutchinson to serve on the Board of Trustees," Collins said. "I look forward to contributing my professional experiences and will do everything I can to help drive the BRTC mission and vision forward."

Collins grew up in Reyno and lived in Randolph County until five years ago when she and her husband Phil moved to Paragould full time in order to live near their two granddaughters.

Before retiring, Collins worked at BRTC for 23 ½ years. She was a business instructor, Technical Education Division Chair, Director of Financial Aid, Coordinator of Student Services on the Paragould Campus and Interim

Vice President of Student Services. She worked 18 1/2 years teaching business in the public schools as well.

"Carolyn brings a tremendous amount of knowledge and experience to the Board of Trustees," said President Dr. Eric Turner. "We are fortunate she graciously agreed to serve. Her genuine interest BRTC's success will be an asset to our college and we are pleased to be working with her."

Collins holds a BSE in Business Education, an MSE in Business Education, and Specialist in Community College Teaching degree, all from Arkansas State University.



## Interpretive Panels Installed at REACH

Have you ever wanted to visit the REACH sites at Dalton but could never make it during open hours? Now visitors can take a self-guided tour through the Rice-Upshaw site with the installation of interpretive panels.

In 2013 BRTC was awarded a grant from the Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources Council which included the installation of interpretive panels at both the Rice-Upshaw site as well as the William Looney Tavern. These panels explore many topics including trade at Reuben Rice's, farming in Davidson Township, and various skilled craftsmen in the area.



*An interpretive panel at the William Looney Tavern.*

The panels at the William Looney Tavern still can only be seen during open hours since the tavern is located on private property.

The REACH sites will be open for tours Saturday, August 15th from 9:00 a.m. to noon. A donation of \$3.00 per person ages five and older which includes a tour of both the historic Rice-Upshaw site and the Looney Tavern. Admission is free for children under the age of five.

The REACH sites are open for tours every Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. as well as the second Saturday of each month from 9 a.m. to noon through October. For more information regarding the REACH sites, please contact Jessica Bailey at 870-248-4189.

## Groups Invited to Schedule “Opening Hearts and Minds” Presentations

The Task Force for “Cultural Connections: Opening Hearts and Minds in Rural Northeast Arkansas” will offer a series of presentations for civic, governmental, social, and church groups across Randolph, Clay, and Lawrence counties this fall. Several have been tentatively scheduled, beginning in September.

These community-wide presentations are designed to provide factual information that responds to such questions as “What is the net cost and the economic impact of immigrants?” “How do immigrants contribute to Arkansas’s workforce?” The presentations will also focus on such topics as citizenship and language challenges and the impact of the state’s immigrants on education, housing, and health care.

The presentations were discussed at a Task Force meeting held July 21 on the BRTC campus. The Task Force includes a group of approximately 25 local community leaders who are committed to a community that is open and welcoming to the anticipated non-native workers who may come to this region as a result of new area jobs.

A highlight of last week’s meeting was a presentation “What’s In A Word?” by BRTC President Dr. Eric Turner who, using the book of James as text, discussed the human tendency to use words in harmful and negative ways. Turner also expressed his early and ongoing support of the efforts of the “Opening Hearts and Minds” project. He emphasized the responsibility and the opportunity for the college to be a leading positive force in this aspect of community growth.

The Task Force is a sub-committee of the Northeast Arkansas Intermodal Facilities Authority. Its activities are supported by BRTC and are funded in part by the BRTC Foundation, the Arkansas Humanities Council, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Its purpose is to encourage and support the community’s efforts to be an open, welcoming environment for its citizens.

Presentations will be based in part on a series of reports commissioned by the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, titled [A Profile of Immigrants in Arkansas](#). “None of us are experts,” noted Ziegler. “We don’t pretend to be. But we



*Dr. Turner addressing the Task Force.*

are trying to learn as much as we can about the changes that are coming, and that includes gaining a better understanding about the newcomers—the immigrants—who may come to our region as a part of our workforce.”

Task Force members also received their copies of a book, *Enrique’s Journey*, which will be the topic of readings and discussions in the spring. The “Opening Hearts and Minds” project will culminate with a visit and two public presentations by the book’s Pulitzer Prize-winning author, Sonia Naz-

ario, April 7, 2016.

The Task Force is also accepting the names of prospective community reading groups from junior high age and older with plans to hold “community reads” sessions prior to the author’s visit. Groups can choose to read all or part of the regular version of the non-fiction book, a “Young Adult” version, or a Spanish language version. These reading sessions will also be facilitated by members of the Task Force and its Team Leaders.

For more information about the project and the presentation options, contact BRTC’s Office of Corporate and Community Education (870-248-4180), or email Ziegler at [janzz@blackrivertech.edu](mailto:janzz@blackrivertech.edu).

## Shelia Dobyys Scholarship

Natalie Gipson of Imboden has accepted the Shelia K. Dobyys Nursing Scholarship to attend Black River Technical College. This scholarship is provided by A & D Propane, Inc.

Gipson is a 2015 graduate of Sloan Hendrix. She is the daughter of Frema Gipson of Imboden and Steve Gipson of Pocahontas.

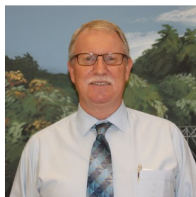
While at Sloan Hendrix, Gipson was the Student Council President, the vice-president of FFA and captain of the basketball team. She plans to one day become a nurse practitioner.



*Natalie Gipson*



## New Hires and New Positions at BRTC



**Alan Decker** of Jonesboro has accepted the position of Director of Corporate and Community Education on the Paragould Campus. He received his AAS in Business at ASU at Newport and his Bachelor of Science. Decker worked in organizational development and manufacturing, most recently as Assistant Director at the Arkansas State University Delta Center for Economic Development for 13 years.



**Angie French** of Pocahontas has been named Recruitment Specialist in the Department of Student Affairs. French has been working in the Department of Finance as the Purchasing Technician for the past three years. Previously, she worked as Administrative Specialist in Student Affairs. She received her AAS in Business from BRTC in December 2014. In August of 2015 she received her BS in Accounting from ASU.



**Darend Kersey** of Walnut Ridge has accepted the position of Business Technology Instructor. Kersey has a BS in Business Education and a MS in Education with emphasis in Business Technology, both from ASU. She taught business and computer classes at both Pocahontas and Walnut Ridge schools. Kersey previously taught at BRTC for six years.



**Diane Graftenreed** of Paragould has been hired as Administrative Specialist I for the Corporate and Community Education on the Paragould Campus. She worked 21 years at Arkla. She worked for World Color which also closed its doors 11 years later. In May 2015 she graduated from BRTC with an AAS in Business Technology with an emphasis in Health Information.



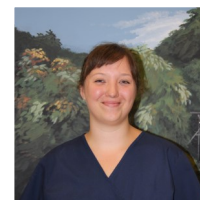
**Karen Marlow** has accepted the position of Spanish Instructor. Although Karen was born in Poplar Bluff, Missouri, she was raised in Melo, Uruguay, by her Missionary parents. She attended WBC and received a Bachelor's degree in Music Education for K- 12, she went on to earn her Master of Science in Education (MSE) for Special Education - Instructional Specialist K-12 at ASU. Before coming to work at BRTC Karen

was an instructor at Trinity Behavioral Health for 12 years and St. Paul's School for over a year.

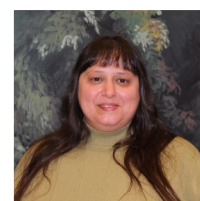
**Lynn Steele** of Doniphan, MO formerly Maintenance Assistant is the new Skilled Tradesman-Carpentry. Steele joined BRTC in 2013 as Maintenance Assistant. Before coming to BRTC he worked in construction for fourteen years. He is a graduate of Doniphan High School.



**Paige Bishop** of Pocahontas has accepted the position of Food Preparation Coordinator. Paige graduated from Pocahontas High School in 2009 and then attended BRTC where she earned an AAS in Dietetics in 2011. She began working as a Dietitian Technician for Five Rivers Medical Center in Pocahontas before graduating and continued there until this position.



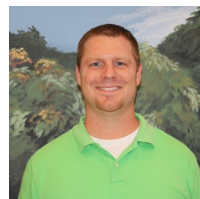
**Patricia Sanderson** of Paragould has been chosen to be the Workforce Program Development Coordinator for the Paragould Campus. Since April of 2013 Patricia has held the position of Computer Service Support Technician for BRTC. Previously, she worked 25 years for L'Oreal in North Little Rock. She has an AAS in Computer Operations, AAS in Microcomputer Management and Applications, and an AAS in Windows and Graphics from State Technical Institute in Memphis, TN. Patricia also earned a BS in Organizational Management from John Brown University, where she will again graduate in the summer 2016 with a Master in Business Administration, emphasis in Leadership and Ethics.



**Sheila Baltz** of Pocahontas has accepted the position of Adult Education Instructor. Baltz has an AAS in Nursing from ASU, a BS in Early Childhood Education (P-4) from WBC and is currently working toward her accreditation for Adult Education at ASU. Baltz has worked the past 2 years as a part time instructor for BRTC. She has also worked as an aid for resource students at the Pocahontas Intermediate School.



**Michael Smith** of Pocahontas has been hired as Purchasing Technician. Smith is a 2001 Pocahontas High School graduate and graduated in 2014 from ASU with his BS in Business Management. He worked at Sears as a sales manager for two years. Before that he was a real estate agent for Archer Reality.



## MSSPS Awarded for Summer Sessions

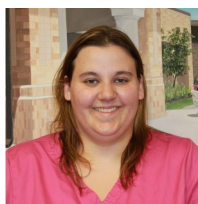
Valorie Anderson, Veronica Smith, and Angela Vitale all of Pocahontas have been awarded the Mary Sallee Single Parent Scholarship for the summer sessions. Each was a United Way recipient as well as gaining funding from the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship.

Valorie Anderson received \$375 for Summer I. She is studying at BRTC to become a Registered Nurse.

Veronica Smith was awarded \$250 for Summer II. She is pursuing her nursing degree at BRTC and hopes to apply for medical school to become a doctor.

Angela Vitale was awarded \$187 for Summer II. She is pursuing her bachelor's degree in business and plans to graduate in December 2016.

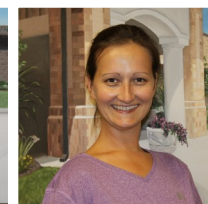
To qualify for the single parent scholarship, individuals must be single parents with custody of minor children, be enrolled in a program of higher education, meet certain income guidelines, and be residents of Randolph County. For more information about MSSPS, contact Janna Guthrey at 870-248-4092.



Valorie Anderson



Angela Vitale



Veronica Smith



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### *BRTC Mission Statement*

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

## Baltz named Board of Trustees Chair

Dr. Paul Baltz of Pocahontas has been named Chair of Black River Technical College's Board of Trustees. His two-year term as Chair became effective July 1 when he assumed the role held by Sue Gibson. Also at the meeting Doug Cox was announced as Vice Chair and Ray Noel as Secretary.

"I look forward to working with Dr. Turner, all the staff and the rest of the Board members to continue to improve BRTC to a higher level in the coming years," stated Dr. Baltz.

Dr. Baltz DDS is partners with Dr. Dennis Holt at Family Dental Care in Pocahontas. He and his wife Nancy have been married for 27 years and have four children, Todd, Matthew, Courtney, and Jared. Dr. Baltz has been a board member since 2004.

"We are fortunate to have Paul as chair of the BRTC Board of Trustees," stated President Dr. Eric Turner. "His experience over the course of his tenure as a board member will be invaluable to the leadership of the college. We are privileged to work with him to further the successes of Black River Technical College."



## Stone named Associate Vice President of Finance

Rhonda Stone has been named Associate Vice President of Finance at Black River Technical College according to BRTC President Dr. Eric Turner.

"We are delighted to have Mrs. Stone join the executive leadership team of Black River Tech. Rhonda's accounting expertise, strategic perspective, and student-centric focus will be invaluable to the College as we move forward in the years to come," shared Dr. Turner.

Stone holds a BS in Accounting, an MS in Vocational and Technical Administration, and a Specialist in Community College Teaching with an Administration Emphasis, all from Arkansas State University. She is also a Certified Public Accountant and a Chartered Global Management Accountant.

Since 2001 Stone has served as a business instructor at BRTC and has been Business Department Head since 2013. Before coming to BRTC she worked as an internal auditor for the Bank of Pocahontas, an accountant for BRTC, and Vice President of Operations and personnel at Planters & Stockmen Bank.

Stone and her husband, Victor, live in Pocahontas. They have two sons, Andrew (Brittany) and Sean as well as a grandson, Xander. Stone is actively involved in Kiwanis and is the pianist and treasurer for Sutton Free Will Baptist Church.

