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# THE RIVER'S EDGE

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## Record Number Graduate in December

BRTC commencement exercises were held this past Thursday evening in the Randolph County Development Center to recognize a record number of 287 December graduates, according to Dr. Michael Sullens, VP for Student Services. The total for December 2011 was 273 graduates. The actual number of degrees awarded for the Fall 2012 semester totals 342, as some of the students completed more than one certification. Separate commencement ceremonies for graduates in Nursing, Respiratory Care, and Law Enforcement were held previously. In addition to the 287 graduating in December, an additional 74 individuals received the GED (General Education Diploma).



*Lawana Watson addressed graduates at December commencement.*

Degrees were conferred by BRTC President Dr. Wayne Hatcher and awarded by Dr. Roger Johnson, VP for General Education, and Angie Caldwell, VP for Technical Education. The degrees awarded included two-year

Associate of Arts and Associate of Applied Science degrees, as well as one-year Certificates, one-semester Certificates of Proficiency, and GEDs.

Christina Derbes, candidate for the Dietary Manager Certificate, served as Graduate Candidate Spokesperson. She spoke of the hardships and sacrifices of the students that are so often necessary to achieve a better life for themselves and their families, and urged them always to be professional in all they endeavor.

BRTC Alumna Lawana Watson served as keynote speaker for the ceremony, telling students "You can do anything you want to do. You can be anything you want to be."

A single mother, Watson earned her AA degree from BRTC in 2008 and then went on to earn her BA degree in Middle Level Education at WBC. While at BRTC, she

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### Important Dates

**December 22– January 1**  
*Campus Closed*

**January 2**  
*Last Day to Register and Enroll in Classes*

**January 9**  
*Classes Begin*

**January 21**  
*Martin Luther King Day—No Classes; Admin. Offices Open*

**February 25**  
*"Ain't I a Woman" Performance*

## Over \$3,000 Raised at MSSPS Auction

Another record amount was raised at this year's Mary Sallee Single Parent Scholarship Auction, according to MSSPS Chair Janna Guthrey, organizer of the event. A total of \$3,192 was raised at the annual fundraiser held Friday at the conclusion of the holiday staff potluck. This amount exceeds last year's record amount of \$2,300. The amount may be matched up to 160% by the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund, which would result in a total revenue exceeding \$8,000.

The event included the traditional silent and live auctions in addition to a 'ticket table' where individuals purchased tickets and placed with an object or objects of their choice and a drawing was held among all tickets placed for each item. "The ticket table, alone, generated over \$800," noted Guthrey.



*BRTC employees Ben Runnels (from left), Alan Haskins, and Darren Plaster served as auctioneers for the MSSPS auction.*

The fundraiser is made possible by the items generously donated by BRTC faculty, staff, and departments. "I can honestly say that I never cease to be amazed by the generosity of the BRTC family," said Guthrey. "Without those who contribute the wonderful items and those who bigheartedly bid on them, the event would not be successful."

Darren Plaster, LETA instructor, and Alan Haskins, director of Fire Science, served as auctioneers (and entertainers) with assistance from LETA instructor Ben Runnels. In addition to staff, members of the BRTC Board of Trustees and the BRTC Foundation also participated in the event.

BRTC's Single Parent Scholarship program provides

*(Continued on pg. 2)*

# Workshops at REACH sites Provide Training, Produce Results

A series of four 'Green' Construction workshops at the REACH sites held October-December provided training in the use of traditional tools and renewable resources to a number of participants, according to Jessica McFadden of the Office of Development. "The neat thing about these workshops," she explained, "is that participants had an opportunity to learn the skills on-site at historically important places, and to apply and practice their new skills in an authentic setting with authentic tools and materials."



*Workshop participants daubing the smoke house at the Rice-Upshaw.*

The workshops focused on energy-efficient practices associated with preservation or construction relating to log structures, in this instance the Rice-Upshaw House and the

workshop participants learn new skills, which will be useful to many of them in their current or new jobs, but we actually have identifiable products that attest to their newly gained energy-efficient green construction skills." Since the tools have been purchased by the college, and with the training of the workshop participants, it is the hope of the college to hold subsequent energy-efficient training sessions and demonstrations of pioneering skills such as those described above.

The workshops were sponsored by BRTC's Office of Corporate and Community Education, and were funded through a grant from Arkansas Energy Sector Partnership.

William Looney Tavern, two of the state's oldest log structures, constructed ca 1828 and 1833, respectively. Instructor Eric Sammons, log specialist of Mountain Home, led the instruction team in teaching green construction skills in several areas: applying chinking and daubing to an 1840s-era smoke house; construction of flooring on log joists; construction of a paling fence at the Rice-Upshaw site; applying batten stripping to winterize the 1840s-era granary; construction of a "shaving horse" and assorted primitive porch or yard furniture; and construction of a stacked rail fence.

Participants were able to use traditional tools, including an antique broad axe, draw knife, froe, adze, wedge and maul.

"We are very excited about the outcome of this project," McFadden said. "Some of the participants came back for every single workshop. Not only did



*Krystal Watson uses the shaving horse created at the workshop while David McLroy looks on.*



*Lee Taylor and Red Pearcy use draw knives to shave bark off a log to be used as the floor of the smoke house.*

## Art Students Draw Smoke House at REACH Site

Dr. Sandy Baltz holds one of the student art pieces completed recently when she accompanied her Drawing 1 students to the Rice-Upshaw site for application of the skills they have been studying this semester.



The subject of the drawing by Kera Hufford in the Drawing 1 Class is the smoke house, one of the outbuildings at the site. Like the Rice-Upshaw House, the smoke house dates to an extremely early part of the state's history. Dendrochronology dates the smoke house to the 1840s, while the Rice-Upshaw house was constructed in about 1828, according to tree-ring dating. The structures form a part of BRTC's Project REACH, Researching Early Arkansas Cultural Heritage.

## MSSPS Cont'd. from Pg. 1

assistance to eligible single parents living in Randolph County and enrolled in an institution of higher education. The funds may be used for child care, transportation, housing, or other expense. Since its beginning, the organization has provided \$148,148 in scholarship funds. In addition to the annual auction, the MSSPS fund receives support from individual BRTC staff members through payroll deductions, from grants, from special events and from the BRTC Foundation.

For more information on MSSPS or to make a contribution to the program, contact Guthrey or Vickie French at 870-248-4000.

BRTC faculty and staff view items donated for the MSSPS auction.



## Art Students Awarded for Their SGA Logo Designs

Heath Kennedy and Kayti Cline, students in Dr. Sandy Davis-Baltz' Design I class, were each awarded \$25 and a certificate from BRTC's Student Government Association, for their designs of an SGA logo.

"We needed a logo for SGA, which is a new organization this year," said Phillip Dickson, SGA advisor. "So we enlisted the help of Dr. Sandy Baltz and her art students to come up with the design."

"The SGA advisors wanted students to design the logo considering SGA is the voice of the BRTC student body," Dickson explained. "The organization will use the logo to represent and publicize the Student Government Association on campus."

The Design I students each designed a logo, and SGA members selected two designs – Heath's and

Kayti's. During the spring semester, Graphic Design I students will create a final logo that incorporates the two designs into one final design.

"On behalf of SGA members and advisors, I'd like to thank Dr. Baltz for allowing her Design I and Graphic Design classes to be involved in the logo design process," Dickson noted. "And we appreciate the students for their work."

"We were happy to collaborate with SGA on this project," Baltz added. "It was a great experience for the design students."



*Kayti Cline and Heath Kennedy show their winning logo designs chosen by members of BRTC's Student Government Association.*

## Robert Bosch Tool Continues Support of BRTC Students

The Robert Bosch Tool Corporation of Walnut Ridge continues their support of students at BRTC by making their annual donation to the BRTC Foundation. The \$2,500 check was presented Monday by Bosch Representatives Steve Engelken, Operations Manager, and Nick Lee, Human Resources Manager. Accepting the check on behalf of the Foundation was BRTC President Dr. Wayne Hatcher.



*Steve Engelken (from left), Vickie French, and Nick Lee stand in front of new furnishings in the Department of Student Services, made possible by donations from Robert Bosch Tool Corporation.*

"Bosch has always been a strong supporter of continuing education," Engelken stated. "We are proud to recognize and contribute to Black River's excellent educational programs and commitment to educating and assisting our local region and industries."

Past donations by Bosch have helped to refurbish student commons areas on campus. Most recently, the student area of the Department of Student Services received a whole new makeover with new furnishings.

"We are truly grateful for the continued support shown to our students by Robert Bosch Tool Corporation," said Hatcher. "Their generous donations are used to provide items that will have long term benefits for BRTC students."

## Hankins Hired as BRTC's Director of Nursing

Angie Caldwell, Vice President of Technical Education, has announced that Tonya Hankins will be the new Director of Nursing at Black River Technical College effective January 7 of the coming year. She will replace current director Ramonda Housh who will begin working full-time as a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner for Corning Area Healthcare, Inc.



*Tonya Hankins*

Hankins was hired as a full time nursing instructor at BRTC in August 2008. Her previous experience includes Director of Nursing and ER Director at Lawrence Memorial Hospital in Walnut Ridge, where she worked for five years. She had also worked for 11 years at St. Bernard's Regional Medical Center in Jonesboro as a cardiac and GI nurse.

She earned a BS in Nursing degree from Arkansas State University in Jonesboro and is working towards her Masters in Nursing Education degree. She is a graduate of Lynn High School and currently resides in Pochahontas with her husband, Law Enforcement Instructor Chris Hankins, and three children.

Housh has served as the Director for the past eight years. "I have loved working at BRTC, and I am going to miss all the wonderful people here," said Housh. "Tonya is going to do a great job as the new Director of Nursing."

"She (Hankins) is professional, organized, compassionate, and committed," Housh added. "She is respected by the faculty, staff and students, and I feel confident she will ensure continued growth and success of this program."



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## **BRTC Mission Statement**

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

## From the President's Desk...



*Dr. Wayne Hatcher*

Several months ago, after the legislative redistricting, it was thought by some in this region that the results would be to our disadvantage. I don't think so. One reason is because BRTC now has at least five state legislators that directly represent our service area—two senators and three representatives.

The senators are David Wyatt (Randolph, Sharp, Izard, Independence) and Robert Thompson (Greene Clay, Lawrence and a section of Randolph that includes Pocahontas). The representatives are

James Ratliff (Lawrence and parts of Randolph, Sharp and Greene), Joe Jett (Clay, most of Greene, and part of Randolph), and Scott Baltz (Fulton, most of Randolph, and a tad of the northwest corner of Sharp). For a good graphic of our state's new legislative districts go to: <http://www.arfb.com/legislation-regulations/election-information/districts.aspx>. Wyatt, Thompson and Ratliff are all returning legislators.

Recently, every one of these legislators reserved half a day to travel to BRTC-Pocahontas to meet with me and my senior leadership team. It was a very positive meeting. We shared information with the legislators about specific legislative issues affecting higher education, in addition to how community colleges directly and indirectly play major roles in economic development and training.

It was with a lot of pride that we also let them know the advances we continue to make on enhancing student success and completion as well as incorporating more progressive instructional delivery—with more to come.

As we shared information and discussed various topics, I was impressed to observe that each legislator not only asked pertinent questions, but were

## Graduation Cont'd. from Pg. 1

served as Chapter President for Phi Theta Kappa, and also was Regional Vice President for the honor society. At WBC, she was Vice President and President of the Williams Educational Organization.

Watson received the Mary Sallee Single Parent Scholarship and was a student spokesperson at BRTC's annual scholarship luncheon. She currently is a 2nd Grade Self-Contained Special Education Teacher at Alma Spikes Elementary School, and is pursuing her master's degree at Arkansas State University.

quick to take notes and openly make candid inquiries. Without exception, each of your legislators repeatedly voiced their support for the additional progress that the faculty and staff at BRTC are making in so many areas, and stand ready to accelerate our progress as opportunities permit. We let them know that we appreciate their support...and that we would be in contact soon to help them do just that.