The Alabama College Association

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The Alabama College System: Rising to the Challenge
President’s Message

As employees of the Alabama College System we face challenges everyday. We face the challenge of providing quality, affordable, and accessible education for the many students we serve. We face the challenge of providing beneficial improvement to our state's workforce partners. We face the challenge of cultivating the professionals who are employed in our system. Yes, we face a myriad of challenges, but we always rise to meet them.

If you are an administrator, faculty member, or a support staff employee, there are challenges that you encounter everyday at your institution. The Alabama College Association is here to provide professional development and training that will assist you in your efforts to effectively address your challenges and to grow as a professional. Being a member of the Alabama College Association provides you with the opportunity to be prepared and enlightened. The members of the ACA Executive Committee will keep this perspective in mind as we begin plans for our annual conference to be held in Birmingham November 18 through 20.

I look forward to working with all employees of the Alabama College System this year as we join together to rise to meet current and new challenges.

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In Memoriam

On April 8, the employees of the Alabama College System lost a friend and supporter in Dr. Anthony Molina, President of Trenholm State Technical College and First Vice President/President Elect of the Alabama College Association. For anyone who knew Dr. Molina, they will remember his engaging and friendly smile as well as his dedication to our system, his college, and the students he served. Dr. Molina’s legacy will be one of inclusion and service. He will be missed.

Interested in presenting a session at this year’s ACA Conference?

Information on how to submit a proposal for the 2007 conference can be found on the back cover of this issue of the Journal, or can be found by visiting the ACA website at www.alabamacollegeassociation.org.

Proposals are due by June 29, 2007 and should follow one of the following areas of interest:

- Teaching and Learning
- Student Success
- Staff Development
- Leadership Development
- Workforce Development

ACA History Project

ACA Historians Chris Grindle and Kevin Windham are launching a historical study of the ACA. Specifically, they are focusing on the last 16 years of the association (1990-2006). If you are a past president, secretary, or executive board member and have minutes of the executive committee meetings, ACA Journals and/or conference programs, please email Grindle at cgrindle@jeffstateonline.com or Windham at kwindham@sheltonstate.edu.
In conjunction with the 14th Annual Bridge Crossing Jubilee, U.S. Senator Barack Obama D-Ill., served as the keynote speaker at “The Martin and Coretta Scott King Beloved Community Unity Breakfast” held on the campus of Wallace Community College Selma March 4.

The breakfast was sponsored by the National Voting Rights Museum and Institute, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Zeta Eta Omega Chapter, Inc., the 21st Century Youth Leadership Movement, and the college.

Sen. Obama praised Selma for its civil rights achievements and said that his presidential candidacy has a direct relation to the events of 1965. “I am the product of your legend,” Obama said. The symbolism of Obama speaking at a school named after the former governor who stood in the schoolhouse door to keep people like the senator from entering was not lost on many in the crowd.

Dr. James M. Mitchell, president, of Wallace Community College Selma, presided over the program. Program participants included Governor Bob Riley; Senator Hank Sanders; U.S. Congressman Artur Davis, Alabama’s 7th Congressional District; U.S. Congressman Keith Ellison, Minnesota’s 5th Congressional District; Mayor James Perkins, Jr., City of Selma; and Attorney Faya Rose Toure’.

“We were honored to have Senator Obama on our campus and feel that he brings a more inclusive perspective to the national scene that offers hope and opportunity for all. His visit to our campus was very historic and exciting,” said Mitchell.

Recently the Lurleen B. Wallace Community College Foundation accepted a donation of $250,000 from the Solon and Martha Dixon Foundation for improvements to the Martha and Solon Dixon Center for the Performing Arts located on the Andalusia Campus.

The donation will pay for replacing the theater’s seats, lighting, updating the bathrooms and the addition of new carpeting.

“We appreciate the donation and the money that was donated is well on its way to being spent,” Dr. Edward Meadows, president of LBWCC, said. Since its construction 25 years ago, $1 million has been donated solely for the upkeep and improvement of the Dixon Center.

“The theater does represent the Dixon name,” Meadows said. “The Dixon Foundation and Martha Dixon want to make sure the theater is always kept in a state of good repair.”

The Dixon Foundation has also donated money for LBWCC to build a baseball press box, purchase new faculty furniture, a new gym roof, and construction of the new Child Development Center.
Wallace State Employees Earn Awards

Wallace State President, Dr. Vicki Hawsey, and four faculty and staff members at Wallace State Community College in Hanceville have been recognized by the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development of the University of Texas at Austin with NISOD Excellence Awards.

Dr. Mary Barnes, English instructor; Dr. Teresa Ray-Connell, dental hygiene instructor; Jim Thompson, welding instructor; and Libby Edmondson, academic division administrative assistant, were singled out along with Hawsey for the award based on demonstrated educational excellence in their respective disciplines.

Hawsey has provided leadership that has earned the college national recognition for excellence in teaching and learning. Barnes was instrumental in the recent development of Wallace State’s developmental education plan. Thompson and Ray-Connell have been on the forefront of the implementation of cutting-edge classroom technology. Edmondson has supported instructional advancements in academic affairs.

Since its inception in 1978, the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development has emphasized the importance of teaching and leadership excellence in institutions of higher education. NISOD works to serve, engage, and inspire teachers, researchers, and leaders through conferences, publications, partnerships, programs and services.

Awards will be presented at the NISOD Annual Conference on Teaching and Leadership Excellence in Austin, TX in May.

NACC President Receives Award

The Chair Academy, an organization dedicated to advancing academic and administrative leadership training worldwide, has announced this year’s 2007 Exemplary Leader Award Winners. Dr. David Campbell, president of Northeast Alabama Community College, has been recognized as one of the Academy’s 2007 International Exemplary Leader Award Winners.

The nomination of Dr. Campbell listed several significant accomplishments. Among those accomplishments cited is a 40% increase in student enrollment since 2001; new construction of a $11 million Health Education and Technology building; the implementation of new certificate and diploma programs; class scheduling improvements to facilitate student progress in degree programs; major enhancements in the developmental studies programs; and campus beautification including a half mile walking track.

The Exemplary Leader Awards were presented at the Academy’s Sixteenth Annual International Conference held in Jacksonville, FL, March 7-10.

Dr. Campbell’s international recognition as an Exemplary Community College Leader shows that he has modeled best practices in leadership in the academic and administrative areas. Included among the leadership best practices are loyalty, commitment, integrity, and open communication to enhance the overall effectiveness of an institution.
Eight students have completed the first class of the newly established ophthalmic assistant program at Wallace Community College-Dothan.

According to Amy Brabham, workforce development coordinator at Wallace, the program was created as a partnership between WCC and Eye Center South to produce qualified workers in this very specialized field. Ophthalmic assistants work closely with ophthalmologists in treating diseases and conditions of the eye. They assist physicians by administering routine eye exams and providing patient education. Employment opportunities also exist with ophthalmic equipment manufacturers.

Wallace created the 12-week, 130-hour program to meet the increased demand in the local workforce.

Recruitment efforts at Gadsden State Community College are underway to enroll high school juniors and seniors in the Gadsden State Community College Early College Enrollment Program. Officials hope to have approximately 15 students on GSCC campuses for the program this fall. The program is designed to give the students an opportunity to work toward a technical college degree while completing their high school graduation requirements, all with free college tuition.

The program began in the Fall of 2006, and officials at GSCC say that they are very pleased with the results. Dr. Cheryl Cephus-Vickers, who coordinates the program for GSCC, said that a total of eight students took part this year, and all are doing well. Four are enrolled in the Welding Technology program, two in Civil Engineering, one in Machine Tool Technology and one in Cosmetology.

Two of the students told Dr. Cephus-Vickers that they were considering dropping out of high school when the opportunity for the Early College Enrollment Program came along, which she says shows the importance and necessity of this program.

Tim Green, dean of Technical Programs at Gadsden State, agreed. “This is why the program was created. There is a misconception that those who drop out of school are those who can’t do the work. They can do it, and the Early College Enrollment Program allows them the opportunity to achieve both high school and college credit, while being involved in something they want to be.”

Half of the courses the students take are academic, and the other half is in their specialized area of study. To be eligible, students must have passed the Alabama High School Graduation Exam, the Gadsden State entry test, and have a 2.5 grade point average and an interest in enrolling in a college technical degree program.

Green pointed out that students who are graduates of technical degree programs can expect to earn at least 24% more than workers with only a high school diploma and that fact is not being lost on the students.

Gadsden State President, Dr. Renee Culverhouse, said that the demand in industry for a skilled workforce has increased dramatically both in the Gadsden area and nationwide, and the Early College Enrollment Program “will more quickly address the industry’s increasing demand for technical professionals while offering an innovative opportunity for qualifying high school students to get a head start on their education and career.”

Dr. Cephus-Vickers said that she will be visiting area high schools soon and hopes to take some of the current students with her on the visits since their stories prove just how effective the program is.
Southern Union Program Named Best in Nation

Number one. No matter what discipline or activity, everybody dreams of being it, but few actually achieve it. However, for the Surgical Technology Program at Southern Union State Community College that distinction is a reality.

The Surgical Technology program at SUSCC topped the list of the Program Assessment Evaluation (PAE) Elite 20 Programs for 2006. This nationwide recognition is based on a yearly assessment exam given to students by the Accreditation Review Committee on Education in Surgical Technology. The Elite 20 Programs list marks the highest achieving programs that undergo program evaluation.

In her sixth year as program director, Dot Nichols, RN, CNOR, said she is very excited about this number one ranking. “Our students are very dedicated, and it is nice to have recognition for their hard work,” commented Nichols.

Acceptance into Southern Union’s surgical technology program is a competitive process. Averaging about 20 members per class, the certificate program is completed in two semesters and consists of classroom instruction and a hands-on skills laboratory. Students then put those skills to work at clinical sites where they assist with and observe surgeries.

Nichols explained that so many small things go into making a successful surgical technologist. “You have to be particular about everything that you do,” she said. “We really stress keeping instruments and the work area sterile. Things have to be handled with diligence and care.”

Nichols went on to say that the success of the program at SUSCC is due, in a large part, to the support given by area hospitals. “I am very appreciative of the donations given by local hospitals, and their assistance in the training process. We are so fortunate to have a good network of local facilities that support our program.”

Drake Students Serve Program

Drake State Technical College Accounting students recently shared their skills with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.

VITA is a community-based campaign of volunteers trained to assist low and moderate income, disabled, and legal immigrants file their federal and Alabama income tax returns.

Drake students participating in the program were Carmen Burks, Reyel Bowen, Hakima Davis, Jenetta Fudge, Twyla Gibson, Donielle Jefferson, Laquasha McDavis, Gwenita Roberts, Kathy Robinson, Victoria Robinson, Rose Pitts, and Sabrina Tolbert.

The students were trained by Internal Revenue Service employees and are protected by the 1997 Volunteer Act, which states that volunteers cannot be held legally responsible for income taxes that are prepared free of charge.

“The VITA program was a good experience for our students,” stated Dr. Verlindsey Stewart, Drake accounting instructor. “They had a chance to use their business skills and give something back to the community.”
Dr. Beth Bownes-Johnson, head of the English Department at Wallace State Community College in Hanceville, is the featured author in a recent issue of “Innovation Abstracts” published by the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development at the University of Texas at Austin.

Bownes-Johnson’s work, titled “Using an Interactive MultiMedia Classroom: Making a Connection,” demonstrates a link between technologically-advanced learning environments and better student outcomes.

“I have discovered that by having an interactive multimedia classroom equipped with Elmo, Smart Board, VCR/DVD, and Internet access, not only have students enjoyed the course more than ever, but grades and attendance have improved as well,” she wrote.

Bownes-Johnson has presented at the UCEA Conference in Portland and published articles in the Community College Journal of Research and Practice and ERIC. Excerpts of a study she conducted on reading and gender inequity were published in the text “Writing and Presenting Research” last year.

She is a member of the State Developmental Committee for English Educators of Learning-Centered Excellence, the National Association for Developmental Education, and the Association of College English Teachers of Alabama. She also serves on the City of Cullman Park and Recreation Board.

A member of the Wallace State faculty since 1994, Bownes-Johnson holds a master’s degree and an Ed.S from UAB, and an Ed.D in Educational Leadership from The University of Alabama.

Jefferson State Instructor Selected for Honor

Dr. Liesl Ward, a member of the Jefferson State faculty, was recently selected as a Faculty Scholar for the 2007 Phi Theta Kappa Faculty Scholar Conference and 2007 Phi Theta Kappa International Honors Institute.

Dr. Ward is one of only 24 people who were selected for this honor from a large pool of applicants. Applicants must be Phi Theta Kappa advisors who have exhibited exceptional knowledge of the current Honors Study Topic, Gold, Gods, and Glory: The Global Dynamics of Power, and demonstrated excellence in teaching.

The Faculty Scholar Conference, held in Jackson, MS, February 1-4, prepared the Faculty Scholars to serve as group facilitators at the Phi Theta Kappa International Honors Institute.

The 39th annual International Honors Institute will be held at Wheaton College in Wheaton, IL, on June 18-23, 2007. During this conference, Dr. Ward and the other Phi Theta Kappa Faculty Scholars will lead groups of 15-20 honor students in seminar discussions of the issues presented throughout the week.
In an effort to address the changing way community college employees must market their institutions, the Alabama College System Public Relations Association (ACSPRA) recently held a professional development workshop.

The spring workshop for public relations and recruiting personnel was held on the Bessemer campus of Lawson State Community College. Over forty marketing, recruiting, and public relations professionals from the Alabama College System attended the event which included two sessions.

Jeff Kallay of the higher education marketing firm TargetX conducted a session on revolutionary recruiting methods used to communicate with today’s tech-savvy “millennial” students. This fast-paced “Recruiting 2.0” workshop provided attendees an opportunity to examine new ways to reach potential students – and their parents – through podcasts, instant messaging (IM), blogs, emails and websites that are informative and easy to navigate.

Tim Denny, co-founder of DavisDenny, a communications firm in Birmingham, facilitated a session on image development to promote the system’s mission and services.

Charles Ireland, Bevill State’s Director of Skills Training/Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) was presented with the Outstanding Service Award from the American Technical Education Association (ATEA) at the ATEA 44th National Conference on Technical Education held in Atlanta.

This award is presented annually to an individual who has made major contributions and achieved prominence in technical education at the local, state, regional and national levels.

Ireland’s many contributions include partnering with the Career Centers in the community to develop and facilitate workshops and classes enhancing community awareness of the importance of technological skills. He has been instrumental in providing an environment of hands-on instruction to train individuals to meet the challenges of new technology moving into the region.

Ireland serves on Bevill State’s four workforce advisory committees bringing industry, civic, and service leaders together to meet the area’s training needs. He is also responsible for setting up classes and recruiting industry personnel to assist in attracting students to train for employment in high demand technical careers.

Additionally, at the same meeting, Wilson Machine and Welding Shop was presented with a Silver Star of Excellence Award by the National Technical Honor Society (NTHS). The award came as a result of Wilson Machine’s strong support of Bevill State-Sumiton’s Machine Tool, Welding Technology and Diesel Mechanics programs.

In addition to the award, Wilson Machine and Welding Shop will be listed in the NTHS National Hall of Fame for Educational Excellence.

For the latest ACA updates visit...
www.alabamacollegeassociation.org
Northwest-Shoals Community College (NW-SCC) recently unveiled a new face in the Associate Degree Nursing Program. He’s a 6’1 medical mannequin that breathes, blinks, and simulates bodily functions. He’s no dummy; he’s Stan short for Standard Man, a virtual patient capable of simulating nearly any possible human medical emergency.

Continuing its investments in state-of-the-art educational technology, NW-SCC has become the first community college in Alabama to purchase a Medical Education Technologies, Inc.™ (METI™) Human Patient Simulator. Used in conjunction with a laptop computer, an instructor can use Stan, to simulate a wide range of complex medical conditions from head traumas to head colds. The high-tech medical Emergency Care Simulator (ECS®) reacts realistically to various treatments, allowing the instructor to accurately assess the actions of a student in the treating of a patient.

According to Bret McGill, assistant Dean of Instruction/Health Studies Division Chairperson, Stan will be a valuable tool in training students enrolled in the college's Associate Degree Nursing Program. “Our students are training for careers that involve life and death decisions, which makes it imperative that they have access to the most current technology,” stated McGill.

During training sessions, students can perform a diverse set of actions and interventions. “We can expose students to many problems they would be unable to encounter in the classroom. When these students enter clinicals at area hospitals, they will be better able to address the needs of the patient,” he added.

Stan, the Emergency Care Simulator, includes five pre-packed patients that run 12 pre-packaged scenarios. The instructor can edit medical conditions or create new patients with new circumstances. Student training scenarios include allergic reactions, the effects of nerve gas or weapons of mass destruction, drug overdoses, a severed limb or other traumatic injuries.

There are options for creating real life or death situations. The simulator is able to recognize and respond to medical treatment and drugs. Once an emergency scenario is started, Stan becomes a real “life” placed in the hands of students that must diagnose and administer the correct treatment. Mistakes can send Stan into cardiac arrest and result in death, thus making any scenario, truly, life or death.

Stan is completely interactive. Instructors use software to enter various emergency scenarios which students are challenged to recognize according to the simulator’s response. The simulator then responds directly to the treatment as administered by the students. No interaction from the instructor is needed once the program has begun. Students can practice skills over and over again until mastery is achieved, improving competence and confidence.
Appreciating Cultures at CVCC

Scared of Wal-Mart? Astounded by the corner grocery? That is reality according to guest speakers who participated in Chattahoochee Valley Community College’s annual Cultural Arts Festival Week. It takes a while before a trip to the store becomes a simple trip to the store.

Students at Chattahoochee Valley Community College have been learning about culture shocks, gratitude and determination through the College’s campus-wide learning project called Learning Communities. Each year, a different topic is examined. The theme for this semester is “Becoming American: the Journey from the Dream to Reality.” Students enrolled in reading, composition, literature, history and film appreciation have an opportunity to explore the topic through assignments.

And during Cultural Arts Festival Week, many students showcase their work. The College held oratorical and writing competitions, theatrical performances, art exhibitions, choral and band concerts and Book Day. The book Identity Lessons was chosen and it features a number of ethnic perspectives on growing up in America.

On Book Day, guest speakers illuminated their own stories: Xueying Chen (China), Agnieszka Sellars (Poland), Denise Larracuente (Puerto Rico), Dr. Salman Elawad (Sudan), Jason Robertson (Vietnam) and Aurelia Smith (Germany).

Sellers is a CVCC alum, registered nurse and is studying to become a doctor. She says her determination is a combination of her culture and personality.

Robertson was orphaned during the Vietnam War. His life was changed when humanitarian Betty Tisdale brought him and 218 other orphans to the United States. Adopted by Americans, Robertson grew up in the Chattahoochee Valley.

Chen, Elawad and Smith are CVCC faculty. All mentioned the opportunity that exists in the United States. Elawad lived in the United States as a student but later returned to his native Sudan. Later, he was detained for six months in Sudan for having a master’s degree. “It didn’t take me long to come back to the United States (after I was freed). We’re in the land of opportunity in America. You’ll know it if you visit another country.”

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Reid State Approved as Testing Center

Reid State Technical College has been approved as an authorized Pearson VUE (Virtual University Enterprises) Testing Center which provides on-site, on-demand testing for Information Technology (IT) certifications and other select professional licensure.

RSTC offers a variety of courses that can lead to industry certifications such as CompTIA’s A+, Network +, and Security +. Classes can also lead to several Microsoft certifications that include Microsoft Certified Professional (MCP), Microsoft Certified System Administrator of Windows Server 2003, and Microsoft Office Specialist.

Lawson State Begins New Program

Lawson State Community College has begun a new program for high school students interested in engineering. The program is designed to introduce students to careers they may never have imagined and to improve each student’s math, science, and communication skills.

“This innovative high school program was designed to serve as a launch pad for a wide variety of career options,” explained Dr. Perry Ward, president of Lawson State Community College.
Calhoun Community College is among the top institutions leading the way in workforce and economic development in the state. Recently, the college was awarded a $5 million grant through the U.S. Department of Labor’s (DOL) Second Generation Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) initiative for the Calhoun-led North Alabama/Southern Tennessee WIRED region.

“This $5 million grant will provide the resources and strategies to unify many economic development efforts currently ongoing in our region. The catalyst for this effort is biotechnology/nanotechnology and information technology resulting in a highly-skilled workforce, improved teaching and learning, and enhanced quality of life,” commented Calhoun President Marilyn Beck.

“Addressing the workforce needs was introduced. The focus areas for this initiative are advanced manufacturing, aerospace, agriculture, healthcare, and automotive manufacturing. We realize that the major strength of this project lies in the commitments of our Alabama and Tennessee partners: schools, colleges, universities, businesses, industries, governments, and economic development agencies. We are most grateful to Secretary Elaine Chao, Assistant Secretary Emily DeRocco and the DOL for their continuing support of our region,” added Dr. Beck.

In January 2007, Assistant Secretary DeRocco was the keynote speaker for a regional workforce summit hosted by Calhoun and sponsored by the North Alabama/Southern Tennessee WIRED initiative. Over 300 economic development leaders from Alabama and Tennessee attended the summit, during which a new collaborative initiative focusing on regional workforce development needs was introduced.

In addition to Assistant Secretary DeRocco, Dr. Tim Alford, Director of the Alabama Office of Workforce Development, and Susan Cawden, Administrator of the Tennessee Employment and Workforce Development Division, spoke about state workforce development issues that require collaborative solutions needed to provide an adequate regional workforce over the next ten years. Jim Hudson, president and CEO of the new Hudson Alpha Institute for Biotechnology (HAIB) in Huntsville, discussed the biotechnology field as it relates to the region’s workforce needs, and Dr. Neil Lamb, HAIB Director of Education and Outreach, shared practical ways that biotechnology enhances quality of life.

Bevill State Community College recently received a $1.9 million grant through the Department of Labor’s Community-Based Job Training Initiative for the creation of the Alabama Mine Training Consortium. The grant will provide funding for the development of training and capacity building activities to address current and future mining workforce needs. The current mining curriculum in Mine Safety and Mine Systems Technology will be expanded, classroom and laboratory facilities will be upgraded, and instructional resources will be improved to include virtual mining simulation learning activities.

Bevill State President, Dr. Harold Wade indicated that the College has established the strategic partnership with the Alabama Coal Association, the mining industry, the WIA North Alabama Skills Training Consortium, and secondary school systems to foster awareness of the many options available in energy-related careers. Additionally, summer camps, dual high school/college credit courses, and academic support services will compliment the enhancement of academic programs in mining and mine-related fields.

During the three years of funding, the AMTC will provide an entry-level program in mine training and mine-related careers. To augment classroom training and to better address the safety concerns of Alabama mining companies, the College will develop an initiative for the use of virtual simulators. The simulators will allow students to experience a variety of real-life situations programmed by instructors.

According to Dr. Devin Stephenson, coordinator of the grant proposal, “Addressing the capacity challenges through innovative solutions will result in increases in admission, retention, and graduation of students, increases in the number of middle level and advanced skill workers employed in the mining economy, and increases in the earnings of mining workers who earn advanced certification through career ladder options.”
Representatives from Hyundai Motor Manufacturing Alabama, LLC (HMMA) in Montgomery visited the Alabama Southern Thomasville Campus recently to recruit graduates from the college’s advanced technology programs.

HMMA’s visit to Alabama Southern is a part of the recruiting process at selected community colleges and technical colleges across the state. The Montgomery-based plant plans to produce approximately 300,000 vehicles per year. The plant has been referred to “as the most advanced manufacturing facility on the North American continent.”

“Alabama Southern has one of the most impressive and technologically advanced training facilities that we have had the privilege of visiting in the state,” said Anthony Johnson, Human Resources Manager at HMMA. “We have five graduates from the program here and they are doing great! We are back today to try to recruit more! We need individuals who are multi-craft and highly-skilled as well as motivated to learn and progress throughout our plant. Alabama Southern is definitely preparing students thoroughly to work in the current and future technical workforce.”

HMMA representatives talked to Alabama Southern students about the requirements and expectations of an employee at their facility. Future employees need to have the ability to problem-solve, be technically capable and multi-crafted individuals. Students were also given the opportunity to test for jobs at Hyundai.

“We are interested in students who are technically capable and talented individuals and we have found them at Alabama Southern,” said Troy Pinkey, assistant Manager of Plant Engineering at HMMA in Montgomery. “We need well trained individuals to help us get to our desired production level, and we believe that Alabama Southern has the capacity and the potential to develop some of the best trained individuals in the state. We want to encourage students to study and learn as much as possible and take advantage of a great learning environment.”

Members of the Gulf States Shipbuilders Consortium (GSSC) recently celebrated the official formation of the association at a charter member meeting.

The consortium is a partnership among Greater New Orleans, Inc, shipbuilders in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana, as well as Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) agencies in the three states. For Alabama, the MEP agency is the Alabama Technology Network (ATN).

Last year, ATN was awarded a $750,000 grant by the U.S. Commerce Department’s National Institute of Standards and Technology to assist shipbuilders in the Gulf Coast affected by Hurricane Katrina. The formation of the GSSC will address one of the most pressing challenges facing the shipbuilding industry – the lack of available and skilled workers for the industry.

Byron Dunn, director of the Brewton ATN Center, presided over the charter meeting and explained that in addition to the formation of the GSSC, the grant also addresses additional issues for the shipbuilding industry.

“We are very happy that ATN has been able to play such a vital role in the formation of the GSSC. We look forward to accomplishing the goals outlined for the Consortium,” said Dr. Mike Bailey, president of ATN.

The Alabama Technology Network of the Alabama College System links two-year colleges, The University of Alabama System, Auburn University, and the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama to solve the needs of the state’s industries.
A Grand Opening ceremony for Bishop State Community College’s $10 million Business Technology Center was recently held at the site of the new building.

The 62,400 square-foot building includes a 180-space parking garage, an amphitheater, and a clock tower. The building’s main purpose is to provide new classrooms and office space for the college’s Business and Economics Division, as well the Adult Education and Economic Development Division. Prior to the construction of the new building, both divisions functioned on the main Broad Street campus, and others on one of the college’s three other Mobile campuses.

The new building eases a space crunch for business programs, and also provides updated facilities for computer-related instruction.

The first floor provides for dozens of offices, a 99-seat auditorium, three classrooms, one lab, and one training room. The second floor houses 14 classrooms and labs. The third floor features a suite for the president including offices, a boardroom and a private dining room. The atrium opens only into the third floor, providing a large reception space.

The clock tower is 70 feet tall. It features a programmable bell system that not only rings the hours, but is capable of playing songs.

The State Board of Education recently gave unanimous approval for Jefferson State to begin construction on a multi-purpose classroom building in Chilton County. The new facility will be located on sixty acres of land donated by the City of Clanton on Highway 145 near an I-65 off-ramp.

“The citizens in and around Chilton County deserve all the educational opportunities and services Jefferson State can provide,” said Jefferson State Vice President Joe Morris. “With a remarkable cooperative spirit, this community has proven they value what a community college can offer.”

Plans for the new building consist of two parts. The first is a two-story, 32,000 square-foot multipurpose building containing classrooms, computer labs, science/biology labs, a library, and faculty offices. The second is a 54,510 square-foot multipurpose economic development center containing an 1800-seat auditorium, classroom and meeting space, office space and an industrial kitchen to be shared jointly with the college.

“The new Jefferson State campus in Clanton will greatly expand educational opportunities in the area,” said Congressman Spencer Bacchus. “Community colleges serve a diverse population, from teenagers taking their first college courses to adult learners upgrading their skills. Under the leadership of Dr. Judy Merritt, Jefferson State is one of the finest community colleges in Alabama, and the new campus will be a great addition to Clanton, Chilton County, and the surrounding area.”
Progress continues on the new Health Education and Technology Center at Northeast Alabama Community College (NACC).

The 52,000 square foot facility is scheduled for completion this spring and will open for use for faculty, students, and the community for the Fall Semester 2007 beginning in August.

The building will house all NACC health-related programs at the college, including registered nursing, licensed practical nursing, emergency medical technician, paramedic, and medical assisting.

The building also will provide offices for the Alabama Technology Center (ATN), teleconferencing facilities, and general classroom use.

As a part of the use of the building, NACC officials also plan to arrange educational lectures and workshops for the community on individual and public health issues.

Snead State Community College’s Blount County Instructional Site has found a new home. Moving from Oneonta, the site is now located in the Blount County Career Technical Center in Cleveland.

“The site is fully functional, allowing students in Blount County and the surrounding areas to register for classes, pay their tuition and fees, and purchase their textbooks without having to go to the Boaz campus,” said Director Carolyn Bryson.

Through courses offered at the site and online, Snead State students can earn credits toward their two-year associate’s degree or a one-year certificate. Continuing education classes are also offered at the Blount County Instructional Site for students wanting to gain knowledge and skills without the expense and time commitment required for a college education.

Also offered is a program that targets high school students, the Summer Honors program. Through available scholarships, students who have successfully completed the 10th or 11th grade can take up to six credit hours of college courses tuition free during the summer semester. Students can attend courses for the entire semester or chose to attend courses during one of two more compact “mini” terms.

A wide range of online courses are also available to high school students in any of the programs. Snead State offers the largest number of online courses among two year colleges in the state.

“Online courses are popular during the summer months,” said Dean of Academic Services Dr. Greg Chapman. “Students can work summer jobs or plan vacations and still be able to keep up with their course work via the Internet. Students who are currently attending four-year institutions also utilize Snead State’s distance education program to pick up a course or two while they are home for the summer.”
The 2007 Alabama College Association conference will be held November 18-20, 2007 at the Sheraton Birmingham Hotel and the Birmingham Jefferson Civic Complex. This year's conference theme of "The Alabama College System: Rising to the Challenge" provides a broad umbrella for presentations related to the following areas of interest:

I. Teaching and Learning
II. Student Success
III. Staff Development
IV. Leadership Development
V. Workforce Development

Proposals for one-hour presentations are invited for each of the five areas of interest. An online submission form has been created for your convenience on the ACA web site. If you are interested in presenting, please submit your proposal at:

http://www.alabamacollegeassociation.org/proposals.

For additional information, contact Dr. Humphrey Lee via e-mail at ACA@nwscc.edu

Proposals are requested by June 29, 2007.

Make plans to attend the 2007 ACA Conference
November 18 — 20
Sheraton Birmingham Hotel and Birmingham Jefferson Civic Complex

Professional Development Workshops
Adult Education Workshops
Commission Meetings
Association Meetings

The Alabama College System: Rising to the Challenge