



The Bridge

Volume 2, Issue 2

October, 2010



Important Dates

- October 11 Board of Ed. Meeting;
6:00 p.m. @ BOE Office
- October 15 Rescheduled ISE Day;
No School for Students
- October 15 PEIA Health Screening;
PBHSC, 6:30—9:30 a.m.
- October 16 GED Examination, 8 a.m.
Career-Technical Center
- October 21 Last Day of the First Nine
-Week Grading Period
- October 25 Board of Ed. Meeting;
6:00 p.m. @ BOE Office
- October 28 Report Cards Distributed;
Elementary P-T Conf's
- November 1 Middle School Parent-
Teacher Conferences
- November 2 Election Day (No School)
- November 3 PB High School Complex
Parent-Teacher Conf's

Dear Colleagues,

The most difficult decisions are often not those where we cannot determine the correct course; rather they are the ones in which we are certain of the path, but fear the journey.

Barbour County Schools is a school system in need; the needs are great and the needs are many. During my first few weeks on the job as your new Superintendent of Schools, I have had the opportunity to visit each and every school and board-owned facility in Barbour County. I have found that, for the most part, our schools are understaffed and our staff is overworked--although they are very much appreciated and have displayed a magnificent sense of desire, determination, and dedication to make a difference in the lives of our nearly 2500 students in our school system.

If we are going to see a dramatic rise in positive academic student achievement and a rise in employee morale and satisfaction, it is my contention that we must first adequately provide the staffing in the schools that is desperately needed. If Barbour County Schools is going to positively enhance our high school graduation rate and be within the top 10% of WV WESTEST scores in the State of West Virginia--as opposed to being currently within the bottom 10%--we must first adequately provide sufficient quality staffing in our schools.

Our school system is in need of more classroom instructional aides, school nurses, elementary guidance counselors. Philippi Elementary School, which now houses over 450 students, is in need of an assistant principal to help manage and coordinate the instructional program and other academic needs in that school. Some of our schools only have part-time custodial help and the lack of custodial care is being made up by classroom teachers, other service personnel, principals and volunteers.

Due to the foregoing mentioned above, I firmly believe that the right--although unpopular--thing to do is to recommend that Barbour County Schools attempt to pass its first-ever limited excess school levy to attain the necessary funds to adequately staff our schools. If our school system is going to move forward and provide the educational experiences that our students need to excel in school and in adulthood, we must have the adequate number of personnel assigned to our schools.

On our first ISE Day of this new school year, I have respectfully requested that all Barbour County Schools staff (service and professional) join us in a general assembly discussion at the Philip Barbour High School Complex on Friday, October 15th, at 1 p.m. in the auditorium.

Our school principals have been meeting to publicly announce what they believe are the most pressing staffing needs within their respective buildings and addressed the Barbour County Board of Education at its September 27th school board meeting. We (the school board, school principals and staffs and I) will also present these needs to our respective communities at each individual school when our LSIC meetings are conducted this year.

Since Barbour County Schools is the area's largest employer, we could potentially be successful in passing an excess school levy if all of our employees and their families supported this important and crucial initiative. In the final analysis, it is important to remember that Barbour County Schools cannot become what we need to be by remaining who we are. We must step out in faith and make a good school system even better. Our kids don't deserve anything less!

Cheryl Hawkins Is Named Barbour County's Teacher of the Year



Cheryl A. Hawkins represented Barbour County at the 2010 Teacher of the Year ceremonies in Charleston on September 8. Cheryl is currently serving in her fourth year as the pre-kindergarten teacher at Kasson Elementary/Middle School. The 16-year veteran educator was also recognized at the school system's Opening of Schools program during mid-August.

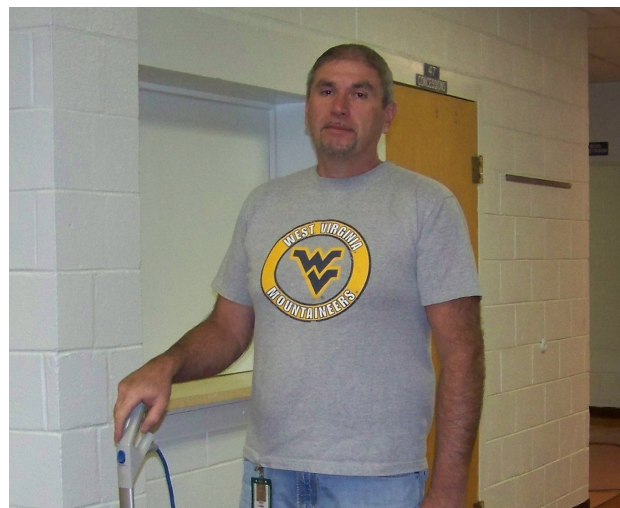
Colleagues note her dedication, enthusiasm and ability to "connect with children" as some of Cheryl's most noteworthy attributes. She points to many of her own Barbour County teachers growing up as role models who influenced her ideas about creativity in the classroom and the importance of relating lessons to "real world" situations. She subscribes to the Alfred Mercier quote of "What we learn with pleasure, we never forget."

Cheryl feels that being a child's very first teacher makes her position one of great trust and responsibility. Intrinsic rewards, like a youngster's smile or reaching an "unreachable" student, are the greatest ones. In her words, "My reason and reward for being a teacher are one and the same...the children!"

Kevin Snider Honored as 2010 Service Person of the Year

"The willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty" was a constant theme mentioned by those who spoke about the contributions of Kevin Snider, Barbour County's 2010 Service Person of the Year. A member of the county staff since 1991, Kevin is presently serving in his third year as custodian at Belington Middle School. He was presented with his honorary certificate during the Opening of Schools program on August 16.

In addition to his regular duties, Kevin has completed numerous hours of job-related training over the years and has served on committees, booster groups and as a chaperone on a voluntary basis. While he takes pride in keeping the BMS facility neat and clean and has a good rapport with the staff, perhaps his most noteworthy contribution is his interaction with the student body, which is described by a co-worker as "caring and supportive."



By stressing the importance of a good education and serving as a positive mentor, he finds himself in a unique position to help youngsters. "Some kids are in desperate need of a positive male role model," according to Kevin. "I'm able to get to know students and mentor them on life skills that will help them in the future. It's rewarding to see them mature and grow into productive citizens."

Education Forum Set For October 19th at PBHSC

Barbour County Schools will host an education forum on the topics of dropouts, truancy, school attendance and drug use in schools. The special event will address “alarming statistics” in those areas and has been planned for 7:00 p.m. on October 19 at the Philip Barbour High School auditorium.

Coordinated by the circuit court system, the board of education, school principals and area lawmakers, the program will feature such speakers as Circuit Judge Alan D. Moats and Barbour County Schools Superintendent, Ben Guido. Judge Moats will discuss “how the problems of poor school attendance, truancy, dropout rates and drug usage in our schools affect not just the school system, but every aspect of life in Barbour County.”

PB's Kyle Duckworth Finishes 7th in National FFA Tractor Event

Six members of the Philip Barbour High School FFA recently attended the organization's Eastern Exposition in Springfield, Massachusetts. Accompanied by their Ag. teacher, Gene Hovatter, the group interacted with FFA members from other states and viewed a variety of exhibits related to their studies, including dairy cattle, sheep and goats.



During the 2010 Safe Tractor Driving competition during “The Big E,” Barbour County's Kyle Duckworth, above, a junior at PBHSC, placed seventh overall to claim a special award and national recognition.



ISE Day Changed to October 15th; Worksite Health Screen Planned

The Barbour County Board of Education has approved the rescheduling of this month's ISE Day from Wednesday, October 13th, to Friday, October 15th. The county's Worksite Health Screening, sponsored by PEIA and formerly held at the opening of school, will be conducted this year on upcoming ISE Day.

The “Pathways to Wellness” event will be conducted at the Brandon Wellness Center at Philip Barbour High School from 6:30 to 9:30 a.m. The screening involves no out-of-pocket expense to PEIA members and primary policy-holder participants will qualify for a \$10 monthly premium discount beginning in July, 2011. Available screens include: blood pressure, waist circumference, total cholesterol, HDL/LDL, glucose, cholesterol/HDL ratio and triglycerides. Optional tests are: hemoglobin A1C, TSH, comprehensive metabolic panel and complete blood count.

To schedule an appointment or receive further information about the screening or optional tests, interested personnel should contact Ronda Jones at (304) 457-3030 (ext. 129) by Monday, October 11.

Early Retirement Notification Incentive News

The Finance Office has issued a reminder that the date for classroom teachers to submit early written notification of their intent to retire in order to receive the \$500 bonus authorized by WV Code 18A-2-2(g) is **December 1**. In completing this process, please remember that a county board may consider the position of a classroom teacher who has provided notice of retirement as vacant and the board may immediately post the position as an opening to be filled at the conclusion of the school year. If another teacher is hired to fill the position prior to the start of the following school year, the retiring classroom teacher is disqualified from continuing his/her employment at that position. For more information about the early notification process or to secure the necessary form, interested teachers may contact the Finance Office at 457-3030 (ext. 136).

Deductions for Organization Dues to Begin

Payroll deductions for all organization dues (e.g. WVEA, WVFT, WVSSPA) will begin on October 15th. WVSSPA dues will be deducted in three (3) equal installments unless personnel notify the Finance Office that they prefer that dues be taken in one (1) or two (2) installments. Those preferring the latter two options should contact Sharon Allen (ext. 136) as soon as possible.

— Odds 'N' Ends —

➤ **Superintendent's Reception:** School personnel who have not had the opportunity yet to meet Superintendent of Schools, Ben Guido, will have an opportunity to welcome him on Thursday, October 14. A public reception, sponsored by the Barbour County Chamber of Commerce, will be held in the commons area of Philip Barbour High School from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. The community is invited to hear an address by Dr. Guido and participate in a question-answer session. Refreshments will be served.

➤ **Colt Homecoming 2010:** The 48th Homecoming celebration at Philip Barbour High School is scheduled for Friday, October 15. The annual parade will be held prior to the football game with the theme of "Light Up Lewis." An alumni tent will be set up at George Byrer Field during the game with all former students welcome to visit and enjoy refreshments. The game between the Colts and the Minutemen kicks off at 7:30 p.m.



➤ **PB Theater Class to Assist Production:** The Theater class at Philip Barbour is working on a project with Dr. Barbara Smith to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Civil War. Dr. Smith, a well-respected local author, has been commissioned to write a play about the county's role during the war. Mary Withers' students are reading through the script and plan to discuss the play with its author. Ultimately, the group will assist in the play's production, giving them a rare opportunity to experience a play from its inception to its final production.



➤ **Greetings from Belington Middle:** The administration and staff at Belington Middle School wishes all Barbour County school employees a great school year! Among the new faces at BMS this fall are: Vicki Gogikar, science/math; Andrew Moore, science; Gina Layhew, special education; and Tina Shriver, physical education. The school is still looking for a half-time reading/language arts teacher, so if you know of anyone qualified, let them know!

➤ **Student Artwork Sought:** The Main Street Philippi organization is looking to county schools for examples of student artwork to include as part of its upcoming Art Walk Gallery project. This collaborative effort has been approved by Barbour County Schools, with Mrs. Karen Larry serving as liaison for the downtown revitalization effort. Contact your building principal if you have any contributions.



➤ **County Teacher Appears in Video Message:** Gene Hovatter, the agriculture education instructor at the CTE Center, plays a prominent role in a current WVEA video spot that emphasizes the importance of "working together" in the process of educating today's children. Gene can be seen in the opening seconds of the message and again during the second minute. Those who have viewed the short video feel that he represents the profession well. The clip can be seen in its entirety on the WVEA website.