



The Bridge

Volume 7, Issue 1

September, 2015



Important Dates

- Sept. 4 OS Day: Schools are Closed
- Sept. 7 Labor Day Holiday: Schools are Closed
- Sept. 14 Bd. Of Education Mtg. @ Bel. Elem.; 6 p.m.
- Sept. 25 Homecoming at Philip Barbour High School
- Sept. 28 Bd. Of Education Mtg. @ Kasson; 6 p.m.
- Oct. 12 Bd. Of Education Mtg. @ Mt. Vernon; 6 p.m.
- Oct. 13 Cont. Education Day for All Employees
- Oct. 14 TASC Examinations and 15 at CTEC; 3:30 p.m.
- Oct. 15 Last Day of 1st Nine-Weeks Grading Pd.
- Oct. 22 Report Cards Are Distributed
- Oct. 19 Bd. Of Education Mtg. @ Volga-Cent; 6 p.m.
- Oct. 26 Elementary Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Oct. 27 Middle School Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Oct. 29 High School Parent-Teacher Conferences

Greetings Everyone,

I am working on beginning my third month on the job as Superintendent of Barbour County Schools and I can tell you that I am thrilled to have the opportunity to work with such an amazing group of dedicated professionals. Not only did I start a new job in July, but several of my colleagues in the Board Office also started in new positions this summer. Connie Mundy is our new Personnel Director, Mike Ferguson is our new Student Services Director, Ashley Workman is our new Director of Child Nutrition and Lisa Knight is our new Transportation Supervisor. All of us have hit the ground running and we are committed to serving the students and employees of Barbour County Schools.

The degree of professionalism that I have witnessed so far from all of the men and women of Barbour County Schools reinforces my belief that we can be one of the high achieving school districts in the State of West Virginia in a relatively short amount of time. I saw a large group of teachers that sacrificed an already-too-brief summer to work with our students in a summer literacy program; teachers and administrators working in their schools to get them ready before the start of school; custodians working extra days to get the schools clean and presentable for our students; cooks working in the kitchens to get them ready to make some nutritious meals; and bus drivers and mechanics doing everything in their power to see that our buses are clean and safe to transport our most valuable commodity.

During our opening ceremony I challenged all of you to believe that we can achieve great things and to push our students to work up to the levels of their abilities. To do anything less than setting high standards and pushing our students and ourselves to achieve them would be cheating our students and I know that we will not do that. We are focused on a terrific future and the only way we will get there is through teamwork and hard work. The work that we all have to do is very challenging, but is also extremely rewarding.

Remember, we want our students to be able to come back to school, long after they have graduated, and be thankful to those people that loved them enough to push them to achieve more than even they thought possible. I'm counting on all of you to join me in this mission of excellence, and I am confident that you will.

Sincerely,

State Awards \$1.2 Million School Improvement Grant for Junior Elementary Project

The West Virginia Department of Education has announced that Barbour County Schools has been selected as one of two LEAs in the state for funding to support a 2015 School Improvement Grant (SIG). The result is an allocation of \$1,203,878.00 over a five-year span for Junior Elementary School. The transformation-model grant, awarded following a competitive application process, is designed to provide significant intervention resources to aid in turning around West Virginia's "Priority" schools. Project implementation is beginning during the 2015-16 school year.



The grant will serve as a catalyst to aggressively address student deficits in reading/language arts and mathematics. The project strategies, activities and interventions will be linked to five-year achievement goals in those two areas based upon West Virginia's Standards for High Quality Schools. The school will use the funding to facilitate critical resources for: necessary rigor and major changes needed in instructional leadership, teacher training and collaboration; increased family/community/school engagement; ongoing and intensive technical support; additional student help, extra opportunities and enrichment in the core content areas; and an infusion of integrated contemporary technology. Ongoing training, support and oversight will be provided by Barbour County Schools, the West Virginia Department of Education, and several identified external providers.

A Special Message from the Superintendent

"Adversity is a fact of life. It can't be controlled. What we can control is how we react to it."

I wanted to take the time to thank all of the men and women of Barbour County Schools for their actions last Tuesday, August 25th. The hostage situation at Philip Barbour High School was taxing for all of us in the school system, particularly teachers, staff and students at our high school. We all understand that the most important function that we have as employees is to keep our students safe and ensure that they all arrive to school and return to their homes safely at the end of each day. We were very fortunate to see that happen on Tuesday, knowing that the results could have been much different.

I especially want to thank Twila Smith, Jen Swift, Mark Lamb, Autumn Queen, Rick Daugherty and Tonya Ferguson for their courage and response. Twila was truly heroic in her handling of the situation and I am convinced that there couldn't have been a finer teacher to handle such a traumatic event. Jen Swift made a very daring exit from the room and alerted the administrators as to what had been going on for nearly an hour. Autumn, Mark, Rick and Tonya ensured that all classrooms were locked down and Mark and Rick tried to talk to the young man to get him to reconsider his actions. Also, to those

teachers on the second floor who kept their students safe and calm when they could hear what was going on in Ms. Smith's room, I applaud you for your work.

Everyone at Philip Barbour High School, along with the faculty, staff and administrators at the other eight schools in Barbour County, the transportation department and the central office staff all did exactly as we would have planned for them to do in an emergency situation. I could not be more proud of a dedicated group of people as I am of each one of you. I also want to let you know that I have gotten voicemails, emails, phone calls and cards from people around the country that wanted me to convey to all of you how proud they are of you for your actions in such a trying time.

While I hope and pray that we never have to face a situation such as this in the future, I know that we have the people that will rise to whatever challenge they face and will do so with honor and courage.

Thanks again,

Jeff Woofter

David Taylor Honored as Barbour County's Teacher of the Year

Veteran county educator, David Taylor, was named as Barbour County's 2015-16 Teacher of the Year at Opening Day ceremonies on August 10 at Philip Barbour High School. David has served county students for 32 years, including the past nine as fourth grade teacher at Kasson School. David cites the early influences of his own teachers and experiences as a summer camp counselor as influences that eventually led him to the classroom.



Mr. Taylor believes in the adage that education is a journey more than a destination. Helping children overcome obstacles is a very rewarding part of his job, and he believes that the blend of a caring demeanor and high expectations best serves his students.

Known by his colleagues and supervising administrators as a hard worker and a willing volunteer, David continues to be a dedicated and dependable role model for the children in his classroom and the student-athletes who call him "Coach."

Jeff Moss Is Named County's 2015 Service Person of the Year

Jeffrey Moss has been selected to serve as Barbour County's 2015-15 Service Person of the Year. The honor was announced before his colleagues at the annual Opening of Schools event in August. Presently serving his third year as custodian at Junior Elementary School, along with the county office and transportation facility, Jeff had previously worked for five years at the Philip Barbour High School Complex.



Mr. Moss is popular among students and staff for his friendly nature and willingness to "go the extra mile" to help anyone in need. He volunteers regularly in both his professional and personal lives, serving, for example, as a youth softball coach and 4-H helper. In addition to keeping the school looking great and operating efficiently, he uses his unique perspective to serve as a mentor, role model and friend to all students at the school, instilling in them a sense of pride for who they are and where they come from.

Friends of George Byrer Field Continue PBHS Facility Improvement Efforts

On August 26, Freedom Bank formalized a three-year commitment of \$15,000 to the Friends of George Byrer Field. The funds will help bring about much-needed improvements and renovations at the county's primary outdoor athletic and performance facility located at Philip Barbour High School. The FOGBF represent a grass-roots effort by local parents, business representatives, school personnel and citizens is focused on three areas: installation of a state-of-the art artificial playing surface and track, construction of modern facilities to include a larger new field house, a concession stand, spacious public restrooms; and new lighting for the entire area. This phase follows the successful installation of new aluminum bleachers and a press box during 2012. For more information about the FOGBF, please visit the organization's website or Facebook page.



Donations, Volunteers Spark Improvements at Kasson School

A flurry of projects and contributions have helped Kasson Elementary/Middle School get off to a fast start in 2015-16. Employees from Arch Coal recently donated a variety of school supplies to the school. Shown at left with the materi-



als are: Misty Bolton, secretary; Teresa Marsh, principal; and Kerri McDaniel from Arch Coal. The company also donated picnic tables that students, staff and community members plan to use for their new pavilion. The large sun shade, located on the main playground, was made possible through a 2013-14 grant of \$8000 from the American Academy of Dermatology. PTO officers Tracy Knotts, Alicia Cutright, and Jennifer Phillips planned the project, with assistance from the board office. Shown below is a crew of volunteers from the local Sunrise Construction Company, which is spearheading the pavilion and playground initiatives.

Catholic Charities of West Virginia has also donated school supplies to Kasson School. The benevolent organization donated supplies and bulletin board materials for the elementary and middle school teachers and their students.



County Selected for Recycling Grant by Coca-Cola / KAB

Barbour County Schools has received ten (10) recycling bins designed specifically for placement at the Philip Barbour High School Complex as part of a national recycling bin grant program made possible by Keep America Beautiful (KAB) and The Coca-Cola Foundation. The local school system was the only 2015 recipient located in West Virginia.



The school system selected the large plastic KAB-logo bottle shaped bins for placement around the campus. During fall and spring sports seasons, several will be placed at the fields and practice facilities at George Byrer Field, while the remainder will be located strategically within the high school and career center. During the winter months, all bins will be used inside the school buildings. Shown above with one of the new bins near the vending machines in the commons area at PBHS are Jared Kitsko and Taylor Groves, members of the Environmental Science program.

Their science teacher, James Poling, stated that "These new bins will help our recycling efforts tremendously. The students will coordinate the conservation efforts each step of the way and learn first-hand about the processes involved in recycling, along with the importance of protecting our natural resources. We really appreciate KAB and Coca-Cola for making this program available and for choosing our county's proposal."

Commander Ralph Baumgardner and members of American Legion Post 96 visited Junior Elementary School in late-August to teach 3rd and 4th graders the proper procedures for folding and displaying the American Flag. Students are now responsible for this duty each morning and afternoon, according to principal, Debra Conover. All 3rd and 4th graders will have opportunities during the year to perform this important honor.

Students at Junior Learn to Honor "Old Glory"

Commander Ralph Baumgardner and members of American Legion Post 96 visited Junior Elementary School in late-August to teach 3rd and 4th graders the proper procedures for folding and displaying the American Flag. Students are now responsible for this duty each morning and afternoon, according to principal, Debra Conover. All 3rd and 4th graders will have opportunities during the year to perform this important honor.



Summer Camps at Four Sites Reinforce Literacy Skills for County Students



Barbour County Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Jeff Woofter is shown above during a visit to Belington Elementary School's Summer Reading Day Camp. The enrichment program helped students learn about Wild, Wonderful West Virginia. Mr. Woofter read to the group from the book, *Golden Delicious: A Cinderella Apple Story*. Written by Anna Egan Smucker, a Mountain State author, the story tells about the origin of the Golden Delicious Apple, West Virginia's official state fruit. Each student enjoyed an apple as a snack during the presentation.

Approximately 150 children received daily meals at two sites apiece at Philippi Middle and Philippi Elementary Schools and one each at Belington Elementary School and Philip Barbour High School.

Students also enjoyed presentations on Beekeeping, Making of Maple Syrup and native mammals. Teachers planned interesting reading and writing lessons to reinforce these and other West Virginia hobbies. The students and staff closed the Summer Day Camp by participating in a field trip to Prickett's Fort.

The three-week "Read and Feed" programs were made possible through grant partnerships with: Literacy Innovation in Rural Education through Collaboration, the National Council of Teachers of English, the Rural School and Community Trust and Leading across Boundaries.

Annual WV Retirement Board Seminars Slated for Employees

The West Virginia Consolidated Retirement Board is sponsoring its annual statewide retirement seminars for members of the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) and the Teachers' Defined Contribution Retirement System (TDC Plan) now through late October. **The seminar nearest to Barbour County will take place on Monday, September 28, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Bridgeport Conference Center in Harrison County.**



Attendance will provide employees with opportunities to learn about their specific plan benefits and better prepare them for determining eligibility to retire. Registration is not required and the sessions are open to all TRS and TDC Plan members at any level in their careers.

A representative from Empower Retirement Services (formerly Great West) will also be in attendance to provide TDC Plan members with tools for managing their accounts. One-on-one review consultations with individuals will be available.

For more details on this annual program, visit the CPRB homepage at www.wvretirement.com and click the 2015 TRS & TDC Plan Retirement Seminars link, or call the office at (304) 558-3570.



Late Activity Buses to Serve PBHS in 2015-16

Philip Barbour students involved in tutoring, clubs, sports, music and other after-school activities will again have evening bus transportation to the north and south ends of the county, Mondays through Thursdays, from September 15 through May. The service is funded through the county's Innovation Zone grant (75%) and a World Vision grant (25%).