

The Bridge

Volume 7, Issue 3

November, 2015



Important Dates

- Nov. 9** Board of Education Meets, 6 pm, BMS
- Nov. 11** Veterans Day Holiday Schools Closed
- Nov. 16** Board of Education Meets, 6 pm, PES
- Nov. 23 to 25** Out of Calendar Days Schools Closed
- Nov. 26** Thanksgiving Day Schools Closed
- Nov. 27** Out of Calendar Day Schools Closed
- Dec. 4** "Winning Culture" Training at Bd. Office
- Dec. 14** Board of Education Meets, 6 pm, JES
- Dec. 21** Board of Education Meets, 6 pm, PBHS
- Dec. 23** End of First Semester and 2nd Nine-Weeks
- Dec. 23** Faculty Senate Day: 2-Hour Early Release
- Dec. 24 to 31** Christmas Holiday Break: No School
- Jan. 1** New Years Day Holiday: No School

Greetings Everyone,

At the opening session for the school year, I told each of you that I would judge you, not on what people had told me about you and your past performance, but on what I would see for myself. What had happened last year or years before didn't matter. This year would be like a re-birth and we would all start with a clean slate.

The Department of Education has released the test data from last year and district rankings have now appeared in newspapers and on the Schooldigger.com website. The bad news is that the results for Barbour County were not good. On the website, we ranked 55th out of the 55 counties and in the newspaper we were tied for 54th.

The good news is that those results were from 2014-15. We are unranked at this point and have the next seven months to continue our work of increasing student achievement and, in turn, improving our ranking for next year. I am seeing some wonderful things going on in many of our classrooms and we need to push our students out of their comfort zones in an effort to get them where they need to be to compete in college, the work force, military, etc.

There will be those, both from inside and outside our community, who will want to focus on the rankings from last year. I can tell you that my comments to those who ask me about them will be that it is something that happened in the past and that I'm now focused on moving forward with the belief that we will rise to the challenge.

On some positive notes, I want to congratulate Mr. Iapalucci and the PBHS band on winning the state championship. I've had the pleasure of seeing the band perform many times this year and they are truly amazing. I also had the pleasure of watching the Philip Barbour cross-country team compete in the state championships at Cabell-Midland High School. Jessica Melvin won the Class AA title in impressive fashion, with Kierra Hodge finishing 4th and Brianna Williams 13th, with teammates contributing points for an overall 3rd place award. The entire team consists of underclassmen and the future looks bright for the sport at PBHS.

I am asking all of you in Barbour County Schools to keep your focus on what it is that you can do for the benefit of our students. As we do so, all of the peripheral issues will take care of themselves. I believe that we have the faculty and staff in place that are capable of doing wonderful things for our students.

With Thanks,



County Teacher Honored on Steve Harvey Television Show

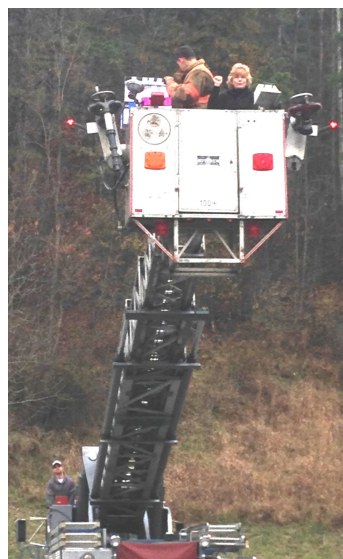
A longtime educator and Barbour County native was recognized for her brave actions during a nationally-syndicated television program on October 23 as an invited guest on the Steve Harvey Show. Twila Smith, whose quick thinking and calm demeanor helped diffuse a volatile situation at Philip Barbour High School just eight days into the new school year, was named a "Harvey's Hero" as she recounted the hostage-taking events of August 25.



As the situation unfolded, Mrs. Smith found herself using a blend of 30 years of teaching experience, her background in working with alternative learning center students and good common sense to keep the incident from escalating from crisis to tragedy. During the "Harvey's Heroes" segment, the host presented Twila with a special jacket, shown above, and a cash award from Green Dot. In typical fashion, she deflected much of the praise, speaking on behalf of colleagues in the profession: "I'm in charge of them when they're on my watch...I mean, when they walk in here, we're protecting; we're supposed to teach them and we're supposed to take care of them."

Annual Pumpkin Drop Held at KEMS

Elementary and middle grade students at Kasson participated in the school's annual Pumpkin Drop contest on Friday, October 30. Each homeroom was challenged to design and construct a container that would protect their group's pumpkin from breakage when dropped



from the top of the bucket of a Philippi Volunteer Fire Department truck. Teacher, Susan Anglin (left) accompanied the heavy fruits and their protective devices. The school superintendent, Jeff Woofter, also participated in the festivities. At the end of the afternoon, Mrs. McDaniel's 7th grade home room was declared the 2015 champions of the engineering contest.

"Winning Culture" Next-Step Training Set For December 4

Assistant Superintendent, Jeff Kittle, has announced that a special training workshop, entitled "Winning Culture," has been scheduled for December 4 at the BOE. Up to 20 Barbour County educators will participate in the follow-up to the Capturing Kids' Hearts initiative. The program is based upon the premise that "truly remarkable outcomes are possible in a classroom where trust, respect, and caring relationships flourish." More than 80 local educators have completed the initial phase of the CKH curriculum.



Lowe's Partnership at VCES Produces School Improvements



Volunteers from the Buckhannon Lowes Home Improvement Store have been working with the county maintenance department and parents and staff at Volga-Century Elementary School to spruce up the building and make needed improvements. On October 29, employees and suppliers painted the multi-purpose room (above), having supplied the necessary materials and supplies earlier. Lowe's provided 100 ceiling tiles for the large room, which were installed by maintenance staff, with the best removed tiles then redistributed to needy areas throughout the school. The Lowes Community Partnership grant, formed in 2014-15, will help the staff address other needs in the near future.

Busy Autumn at Kasson School



The fall season has seen a flurry of activity at Kasson School. The school's new elementary garden gave third graders a chance to gather a nice harvest (left) in October. The school also sponsored an autumn trip to beautiful Blackwater Falls State Park on October 21 as an incentive for pupils

who displayed responsibility and good citizenship. Then, on October 22, representatives of the Barn Hill Reserve brought an assortment of creatures to the school gymnasium for an assembly program that helped children learn about native animal species.

Recent Enrollment Data Reflects Loss of 66 in County School System

The number of pupils enrolled in Barbour County Schools has dipped by about 2.7% over the past year, according to WVDE second month data. The official annual count of 2383 reflects a loss of 66 students from the same period a year ago and will be used by the state as a basis for its funding formula during 2016-17. Five schools saw a modest increase in enrollment during the period, while the remaining four recorded cumulatively steeper declines. Other second month data that affects student enrollment showed a new total of 94 home school students (as compared to 77 at the same point in 2014) and nine dropouts (compared to seven a year ago). Official second month data includes:

<u>School</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>
Belington Elementary	329	332
Belington Middle	285	289
Junior Elementary	124	91
Kasson Elementary/Middle	214	183
Mt. Vernon Elementary	55	57
Philip Barbour High School	698	693
Philippi Elementary	388	370
Philippi Middle	329	330
Volga-Century Elementary	27	38
Barbour County Schools	2449	2383

**Be Aware...
Take Care...
Hunt Safely!**



— Odds 'N' Ends —

➤ **Retirement Notice:** 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 **January 15**. 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. Also, though not required in code, Barbour County Schools is also offering a \$250 early notification bonus to service personnel who notify the board by January 15 of their intentions to retire at the end of the school year. For more information about the early notification process or for the necessary form, interested staff may contact the Finance Office at 457-3030 (ext. 136).

★ **Melvin Is State AA X-C Champion:** Philip Barbour High School's Jessica Melvin, earned top honors at the 2015 West Virginia state cross-country meet on October 31 at Cabell Midland High School with a time of 19:29 to cap off a remarkable season of steady improvement. Jessica finished out the season with consecutive victories at the Big Ten, regional and state championships. She led the Lady Colts to a third place finish overall in Class AA with the help of her teammates, including Kierra Hodge, who finished in fourth position during the state event.



➤ **New Professional Development Opportunities:** Social Studies teachers in grades K-12 may be interested in upcoming professional development offerings available through RESA 7 and the WVDE. Topics include: Law Adventure, Amazon Rainforest, and Civic Education, which culminates in a mock congressional hearing. For more information, contact Jeff Kittle locally, Jeovanna Comer at RESA 7, or Allegra Kazemzadeh at WVDE's Office of Middle/Secondary Learning.

➤ **PEIA Hearings Underway:** The PEIA Finance Board is proposing significant changes for Plan Year 2017 and wants your input! To see the proposed changes, go to the [Public Hearing Presentation](#) portion of the PEIA website, which reflects what will be presented at the hearings across the state. Registration for the hearings begins at 5 p.m. The hearings start at 6 p.m. You must register to speak. Employees who can't attend a hearing may provide input by completing the [on-line survey](#). PEIA indicates that it will post additional information about proposed changes for PY 2017 as it becomes available.

➤ **Attendance Poster Contest:** As part of the WVDE's statewide "Attendance Matters" campaign, counties are asked to encourage students to submit artwork to be used for the attendance campaign in 2016. County attendance directors or their designees will choose one winner in each grade band, including: PreK-5, 6-8, and 9-12 at the county level. Winning submissions are due physically or digitally to the WVDE by December 4, 2015. State winners will be announced on December 18. There will be one state winner in each of the three grade bands. Each winner at the state level will receive a personal computer device. County winners will receive an award certificate. Winning entries will be displayed at the West Virginia Department of Education. For more information about this opportunity, contact county attendance director, Glenn Sweet (ext. 127), at the board office.