

★ **F O R R E S T C O U N T Y** ★



Despite Hurricane Katrina's interruption, construction continues on the new building at the Forrest County Center in Hattiesburg. The 12,000 square-foot building across the front of the campus on U.S. 49 South will provide a new academic image to the school. New spaces include five classrooms, a learning center with 30-35 computers, new library space with two study rooms and administrative space, two new academic offices and new restrooms. The photograph above is from the back of the building. Completion of the project is expected to be sometime in late spring, 2006.

### Respiratory Care program



HATTIESBURG - Pearl River Community College's Respiratory Care Technology program recently pinned 8 graduates in a ceremony in the Lowery Woodall Advanced Technology Center. Pictured from left: Front row - Hope Martin of Columbia, Amanda Ladner of Kiln, Jennifer Christopher of Hattiesburg, Amy Sumrall of Laurel and LaToya Johnson of Bassfield. Back row - Lori Anderson, Clinical Coordinator, Sally Meadows, instructor, Vann Gupton of Poplarville, Harold Harmon of Magee, Jayson Stevens of Covington, La., and Lee King, chair of the Department of Respiratory Care Technology.

### PRCC sponsoring training for construction industry

POPLARVILLE - Pearl River Community College, in conjunction with the Mississippi Construction Education Foundation and TDWA (Twin Districts Workforce Area), is offering a new four-week multi-craft training program in construction basics. The program, called Project Outreach, will train students in construction basics to prepare them for direct entry into jobs rebuilding South Mississippi following Hurricane Katrina. Classes will begin March 6 at the Hancock High School Vo-Tech Center in the Kiln. Classes will meet Monday through Friday, March 6-April 7 from 5-9 p.m.; Saturday, April 8 from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. and April 10-14 from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. There is no cost. Tuition is paid by TDWA, MDES and PRCC. "Across South Mississippi, people are working to rebuild their homes and businesses that were damaged by Hurricane Katrina," said Scott Alsbrooks, Director of Workforce Education at PRCC. "The construction industry is looking for trained workers to begin the rebuilding process, and this pro-

gram is one way Pearl River Community College can help in those efforts." Skills include carpentry, electrical, plumbing, masonry, drywall, painting and a 10-hour OSHA safety training session. The classes will teach individuals these entry-level skills so they can become employed by contractors and construction companies. "Construction folks we talk to tell us that they need people with these sorts of job skills, and they want to hire people who have some basic training and knowledge in their field," said Alsbrooks. "This is just one of the many ways workforce education can help with workforce needs." Program organizers are planning a job fair for participants on Saturday, April 8, with the hope that all students who complete the training will find employment. Class attendance and a drug test will be requirements for completing the program. For more information or to register for the Project Outreach multi-craft training program, contact Donna Clinton at 601-554-4646 or Angelia Ryals at 601-554-4649 at Pearl River Community College.

### Give kids a smile day



HATTIESBURG - Pearl River Community College's Dental Hygiene program hosted national "Give Kids a Smile Day" recently at the Forrest County Center. Some 3,000 children from low income families statewide received free dental services ranging from oral screenings to cleanings. In the photo above, PRCC students Shawne Caldwell of Wiggins and Leah Smith of Petal examine a patient.



HATTIESBURG - Pearl River Community College Dental Hygiene student Lisa Whited of Ellisville examines a patient during national "Give Kids a Smile Day" recently at the Forrest County Center.

### Teacher Profile

**Name:** Catherine Merrikin

**Residence:** Hattiesburg (originally from Boston)

**Educational Background:** BBA - University of Massachusetts - Amherst  
Background MEd - Suffolk University

**Presently Teaches:** Chair of Occupations Training Department - Forrest County Center, Instructor of Office Systems Technology

**Teaching Experience:** 13 years at Poplarville campus, five years at Hattiesburg campus, previously taught high school in the Boston area.

**Favorite Book:** Mysteries

**Favorite Food:** Shrimp

**Favorite Movie:** Comedies

**Positive Aspects of Teaching:** I enjoy watching students become proficient at computer skills and software applications. As their skills increase, so does their self-esteem.

**Advice for students:** Go to class every day! Good attendance increases the chances for positive results.



Merrikin

### Big contribution



POPLARVILLE - Pearl River Community College received a \$4,000 grant from BellSouth recently as part of its program to continue an initiative to maintain scholarship endowment funds for higher education in communities statewide. Pictured for the presentation were, from left: Scott Cook, BellSouth senior account manager, Rick Stewart, BellSouth regional manager, Donna Wilson Lee, executive director of the PRCC Development Foundation, PRCC President William Lewis, and Dub Herring of Picaune, vice chairman of the PRCC Development Foundation Board of Directors. BellSouth is awarding a total of \$60,000 in Mississippi - \$4,000 to each of the 15 community colleges in the state. This year's endowment builds on the \$285,000 the company contributed to Mississippi's community colleges over the last three years. Each community college oversees the administration and award process for their BellSouth endowment. "Over the years, BellSouth employees and customers have used the community college system to further their education and enhance their job skills," said Stewart.

### Former PRCC president elected to foundation board

PICAYUNE - The Southeastern Council of Foundations (SECF), representing more than 350 grant makers and 11 states with a net worth of \$34 billion in philanthropic assets, has elected Ted J. Alexander, CEO of the Lower Pearl River Foundation, as a member of their Board of Trustees. Dr. Alexander has devoted over 43 years to a career in public education in Mississippi as a teacher, coach, counselor, assistant principal, principal, superintendent and as president of Pearl River Community College for 14 years. He is a graduate of Millsaps College and holds a master's degree from Mississippi College and a doctorate from the University of Southern Mississippi. In July, 2000, Alexander was selected to be the initial President and Chief Executive Officer of the LPRVF. Under his leadership, 80 health-related proposals approved and funded by the foundation have pro-

vided \$2,800,000 to enhance the health and well being of the children, youth, and adults of the area. Dr. Alexander is currently an active member in the following philanthropic and professional organizations: Mississippi Center for Non-Profits, Grantmakers in Education, Grantmakers in Health, National Council on Foundations, and served on the steering committee for Health Legacy Foundations for the Southeastern Council of Foundations. He has served for the past four years as chairman of the Wesley Manor Retirement Community and was elected in 2004 as a member of the Mississippi Methodist Senior Services Corporation. He is an advisory council member of the Southern Growth Policies board. Currently, Dr. Alexander is the founding chair of the Mississippi Council on Economic Education, and in January 2006 was named to the National Advisory Committee for the Hurricane Fund for the Elderly - Grantmakers in Aging.



Alexander

## Spring Break at PRCC coming March 13-17