

## Eastern Plans A 'Road Trip' For 1,000 Students At EXPO

Nicole Cook and Barbara Gilbertson told us Jan. 29, about a "Virtual Road Trip" for some 1,000 students, called "Gear Up for a Brighter Tomorrow."

The students are Eighth Graders from 28 area schools. They will go on a "Career and College Tour" on Feb. 26, that will require them to make "real world decisions, such as education, job choices, budgets and purchases.

At the conclusion of the trip, they will see the outcome of their choices.

"Our objective," said Ms. Gilbertson and Ms. Cook, "it to get these



Nicole Cook

eighth graders thinking about how their future choices impact the rest of their lives."

Only 40.2 percent of the students from area schools have gone to college. Program objectives are to include "increasing student academic performance, increasing high school graduation rates, increasing completion of postsecondary education, improving opportunities for teacher professional development, and improving parental involvement," according to the two Eastern staff for the program.

Ultimately, the project, over six years, is to "foster long-term and systemic change by creating a positive and pervasive cultures for learning for under-resourced schools."

Ms. Cook and Ms. Gilbertson relates that in 2006, Eastern was awarded a \$6,777,600 grant for the "Gear Up For a Brighter Tomorrow," over a six-year period.

The program staff, the Eastern staff, volunteers and partners must See Virtual Road Trip on Page 2

## Two Officials, Two Students Tell Club About 'Key Academy'

Principal Sonny Richards and Counselor Mia Smith were assisted by two students from Key Academy, in telling us about the educational institution on Feb. 5.

The students are Amie Shivers and Brandon Dutton, who are two of the 74 students at the school designed to deal with the dropout problem in today's educational system.

Six percent of the students' time is spent in "Intake," or talking with the new students, Richards said. Thirteen percent of their time is spent in "Recovery," which includes explaining to them why they need to graduate from high school, he said.

The students who have not finished high school made "an unwise decision" the principal explained.

"Have you ever made an unwise decision?" he asked his audience.

"Life is full of" changing unwise decisions into wise ones, he noted. And the goal is to learn from each one. "Do not take your eye off that goal," he said he tells the students.

Richards said that 20 percent of the students' time is spent in "communication," with teachers, parents, and school officials. "pacing" takes 26 percent of their time, as they are told about their assignments and when to turn them in.

"Rewards and Celebrations" take 33 percent of their time.

Then there are forms to fill out, he reminded.

There are "probably" 30 seniors who will graduate this year, Richards estimated. There are gift certificates for the graduates.

Ms. Smith said she always knew that her father expected her to succeed. Amie is a freshman. Brandon is a senior. "This is your second chance for success," Ms. Smith told them.

"Stay on that road."

Some of the students have applied for a grant "You have to have a very good base" of life skills he added.

Richards said he "believes" in the young people. "They are a tremendous group," he said. "We are so proud" of them. He called the school "a tremendous place."

The students will have an art display in March or April.

All four thanked the club for the opportunity to tell them about the "Alternative School."

The principal offered a "personal invite" to club members "to come by and visit the school."

## Vo-Tech Director Tells Dollar Breakdown Per Student

Fred Probis, director of the Kiamichi Technology Center, told us last week how the costs of the local vo-tech system break down into dollars returned.

There are currently 320 fulltime secondary students and 204 adult students, he said, for a total of 524 students.

Multiplied by the \$5,256 spent on each student per year, is \$2,754,144.

However, the students who completed their training in 2005 and 2006

alone, earned annual wages and benefits totaling \$2,948,410, he stated.

Additionally, he said, \$101,107.96 was used to train students in local manufacturing businesses. But in calendar year 2007 alone, Bid Assistance Coordinator Ron DiGiacomo assisted businesses across the entire district acquire \$1.7 million in government contracts.

The district includes 10 campuses or offices, at Atoka, Hugo, Idabel, See Kiamichi Technology Center, on Page 2

# Lowber Relative Tells Club About Study in Australia as a Rotary Scholar

Mike Lowber introduced his niece's husband, Bill Shelby, who was a Rotary Scholar, as our Jan., 22 program. Bill has a farm at Webbers Falls, and he talked about his trip to Australia, as he attended the University of Sydney, to study farming and ranching.

Shelby received \$25,000 as a Rotary Scholar, and decided he wanted to go to Australia because "it seemed like a really nice place to go." His trip was to "promote peace and understanding." He represented "small town rural America." But Shelby attended the University of Sydney, and got his Master's Degree.

Australia had active Rotary clubs and three months after he was married, he left for Australia.

Shelby found an interest in U.S. "presidential politics" among the Australians, but also found that "they had ideas of Hollywood and Brittney Spears."

He visited several ranches and farms there, as part of his study, but he also went snorkeling, surfing, and deep sea fishing, on a Rotarian's 40-foot

boat. He also made a five day visit to an aboriginal village.

One of the ranches he visited had "kangaroos jumping everywhere." The kangaroos were not penned up, and ran wild, much like deer in the U.S., he said.

Shelby met his parents, who visited, and they went to the opera, where his mother sang "Oklahoma!"

He also visited the "Great Barrier Reef," and made side trips to New Zealand and Tasmania.

He went to several Rotary meetings and district conferences. The place where the Rotary meetings were held had a bar and they "toasted the queen," he related.

The speaker said he also saw football games as well as cricket, and visited an "Outback Club."

He said the trip gave him "more of a global way of thinking," and that he "made lifelong friends," some of whom have visited him since his trip.

## Kiamichi Technology Center from Page 1

Durant, Talihina, Stigler, Poteau, Spiro and Antlers, plus administrative offices in Wilburton.

Over half of the funding, or 57.8 percent, comes from local taxes. Of that, 81 percent is ad valorem taxes. The state provides 39.7 percent, and the federal government is the source of 2.5 percent.

In addition to the students, Probis said, over 300 groups used the facility, for meetings of 5,776 people.

Evening and daytime short term classes totaled over 500, with 5,415 people attending. The Highway Patrol and local law enforcement also uses the facilities, Probis said.

There are 13 fulltime programs taught at the Tech Center here. They are Auto Service, Precision Machining, Heating and Air, Early Care & Education, Computer Aided Design, Business Administration & Information Technology, Computer & Networking Technology, Commercial Home Services, Health, Career Certifications, Practical Nursing, Construction Trades, Welding, Building & Grounds Technology.

"Your Technology Center is a vital part of the community," Pubis said.

Karl Scifres showed a video and April Murray, Assistant Director, said the school is taking applications currently, in Practical Nursing.

## Virtual Road Trip from Page 1

match the funds, in "time, effort and in-kind donations" each year, they explained.

Partners in the Career and College Tour are the program are Kiamichi Technology Centers, the McAlester Economic Development Service, and the city of McAlester.

A business and industry exhibit area will be set up with "clustered" areas, like health careers, dentists, banks, veterinarians, law enforcement, government, manufacturing and others. Eastern has asked that the exhibits be as interactive and "hands on" as possible.

Matching "services" for the Gear Up students can include tutoring, mentoring, career planning and advisement for students and parents, summer camps, college financial aid workshops, ACT test preparation, on-going professional development for teachers, computer literacy training, field, trips, and a "21st Century Scholar Certificate Awards Event."



Barbara Gilbertson

## Attendance, Visitors, Handshakers *And The Big Gamble*

Attendance last week was 52. Bob Young was a guest of Clem Santine and Kevin Priddle was a guest of Yvette Martin.

Student guests from Kiamichi Tech were the Outstanding Students of the quarter. They were Sean Carwile of Calvin and Jerry Torres of Quinton.

The previous week, 42 were present. Guests were connected with the Key Academy program. On Jan. 29, there were 52 persons present. Dorothy Chatenay was a guest of Jack.

On Jan. 22, there were 45 present. Mike Lowber had as his guest, his wife, Linda. Student guests from McAlester High School were Sara Carpenter and Kyle Wise.

HANDSHAKERS-Last week, it was announced that Doug Auld was the handshaker, and he said he intended to give the dollar to Tim Whipps, but Tim had left early. So what happened to the dollar?

Neither one would return phone calls, and knowing how shaky both are, there's no telling what happened to that large amount of money. They may have split it and left for South America.

On Feb., 5, Bob Basolo had the title, and gave the dollar to Thurman Shuller.

On Jan. 29, Richard Lerblance was the handshaker, and gave the buck to Ronnie May.

On Jan. 22, Jim Henley was the shaker. He gave the dollar to Larry Auld.

We think, on Jan. 15, Jim Thompson had the dollar, and gave it to Tary Clump.

And if you think the dollars are hard to keep track of, try the Big Bucks. Karl Scifres drew the unlucky card last week and did not get the Joker. Mike Lowber drew it sometime, and so did Roi Nelson, and someone else, probably Randy Saunier. But no one has won the Big Gamble, whatever it is.