



# CLOCKTOWER CHRONICLE



## Buzzing in

RLC College Bowl members eat some grapes and listen to music in the green room after winning their regional matches with Shawnee (120-60) and John A. Logan (105-65). Coach Joe Ervin said his team right now is a great group of students with a well-rounded collection of subject strengths. FROM LEFT are; Captain Chris Milburn (Mount Vernon), Quentin Overturf (McLeansboro) and Jackson Adams (Mount Vernon). (Nathan Wheeler / Clocktower Chronicle Editor)

# RLC College Bowl crushes Shawnee, Logan

BY SHELBY PATTERSON AND NATHAN WHEELER  
CLOCKTOWER CHRONICLE STAFFWRITER AND EDITOR

Rend Lake's College Bowl team outsmarted the competition from Shawnee Community College and John A. Logan College with decisive victories of 105-65 and 120-60. It was the first regional matches of the season for the team. Captain Chris Milburn (Mount Vernon) said these two wins count toward the three needed to

advance to the next level. Regional matches will continue later in the spring semester. The regional was the team's third meet of the season. Milburn is the mainstay. He recruited Jackson Adams of Mount Vernon. Quentin Overturf (McLeansboro) came along later. The regional was actually his first meet. Other teammates are Damian Townley of Ewing and Blaze Rightnoway of Bluford. "I think we all clicked really well today," Milburn said. "And I think it

was the practice. We were more ready on the buzzer than we normally are." They said buzzing in first is perhaps more challenging than coming up with the correct answer. "Getting in first is hard," Milburn said. "You can come in before [the question] is over. You just take negative points if you get it wrong." So how do they practice knowing, basically, EVERYTHING from multiple subject areas? They practice by doing mock games. And

they play on each other's strengths — Adams with literature, politics and music; Milburn in chemistry and mathematics; and Overturf with lit and history. Coach Joe Ervin said it's a strong team, adding that, ironically, when he recruits hard, it seems to get in the way of a team that gels. "Friends that like to play together talk to each other," he said. "I just let it happen." "We have our own buzzer system out," Milburn said about practices. "We just set it up and go. We

just read random questions." Ervin said questions at matches so far mostly follow a sophomore-junior level of college curriculum. So the majority of the questions are what the students have already learned or they are in the process of learning. "If you search a little bit ahead of the curriculum here, you can find most of the answers," explained Overturf. "And a lot of the [ques- College Bowl ..... continues on page 3

# Economic Impact Study highlights RLC's role in local economy

BY REANNE PALMER  
RLC PUBLIC INFORMATION

Odds are you or someone you know has been affected by Rend Lake College's economic impact in the last decade, whether that be directly from graduating with a degree or certificate and a subsequent increase in wages, or indirectly through a number of capital projects. A new "Economic Impact of

Rend Lake College" (EIS) report investigated the many economic contributions RLC makes in the region, in what the study calls "the least measured and understood" strength of the college. The report was prepared by the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University (NIU) in partnership with the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES).

The source of community college student employment and earnings data is the Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage record data reported by Illinois employers for each of their employees. UI data are collected on a quarterly basis by the IDES. Using these data, the EIS examined student enrollment and completion data over a 12-year period and matched earnings data with students who graduated or otherwise

left the college for two, full, consecutive semesters. Of RLC's strengths, the EIS states that the college, "adds skills for the local workforce; boosts the competitiveness of area businesses; graduates individuals who generate millions of dollars in local, state, and federal tax revenues; and increases earnings for workers who have graduated." RLC President Terry Wilkerson knows the importance of the col-

lege to the local communities and sees the positive effects it has on a day-to-day basis. "The faculty and the staff at Rend Lake College know the significance of being a community college that continues to have a huge impact on local people and businesses," said Wilkerson. "We know that we can go to almost any Economy ..... continues on page 3

# Giving Tuesday coming to RLC campus Dec. 2

Take a break from studying for finals to stop by the Rend Lake College Student Center on Dec. 2 for Giving Tuesday. The RLC Foundation is joining a network of charities, families, businesses, community centers, and students around the world to spend a day giving and celebrating generosity. RLC Foundation CEO Shawna Bullard pointed out that giving doesn't always have to be monetary. At the Student Center, RLC students can fill out a pledge to give throughout the day. There will also be snacks and treats, like cotton candy and hot cocoa. "We're hoping to convey the idea that you can give of yourself and your time, and that those are viable

ways to come together with your family, friends, and school," said Bullard. "During Giving Tuesday, we will have pledge forms set up in the Student Center where students can pledge to give someone a compliment or helping hand that day. It's more about giving something of yourself, being generous, and doing it often." Join the RLC Foundation in being part of this global celebration by sharing a story about your giving — how you gave, what you gave, and what you got in return — and share it on rlcfoundation.tumblr.com, the Rend Lake College Foundation Facebook page, or on their Twitter @RLCFoundation. Don't forget to include #GiveTo-Get.

# Why all the fuss over 'Black Friday?'

BY SHELBY PATTERSON  
CLOCKTOWER CHRONICLE STAFFWRITER

With the Thanksgiving holiday right around the corner, many people are setting their sights upon the day after the feast — Black Friday. November is filled with thoughts of gratitude as people celebrate Thanksgiving at the end of the month. Turkeys are carved, feasts are prepared, the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade usually plays on the TV in

the background ... all fond memories from childhoods past. In recent years, the craze for Black Friday has steadily gotten more extreme. Stores have begun opening earlier and earlier to slash their competition and serve their customers. A lot of retail chain stores, like Walmart, have now begun their Black Friday deals on Thanksgiving night — cutting into the holiday Black Friday ..... continues on page 3



Brittanie Graham uses her love of theatre every day at her job with ASCAP. The RLC graduate dreams of one day becoming a professional performer.

# Graham turning love of performing into career in the music industry

BY REANNE PALMER  
RLC PUBLIC INFORMATION

With experience both on stage and behind the scenes, Rend Lake College alum Brittanie Graham has turned a love

for theatre and performing into a promising career representing songwriters on Music Row in Nashville, Tenn. Graham ..... continues on page 2

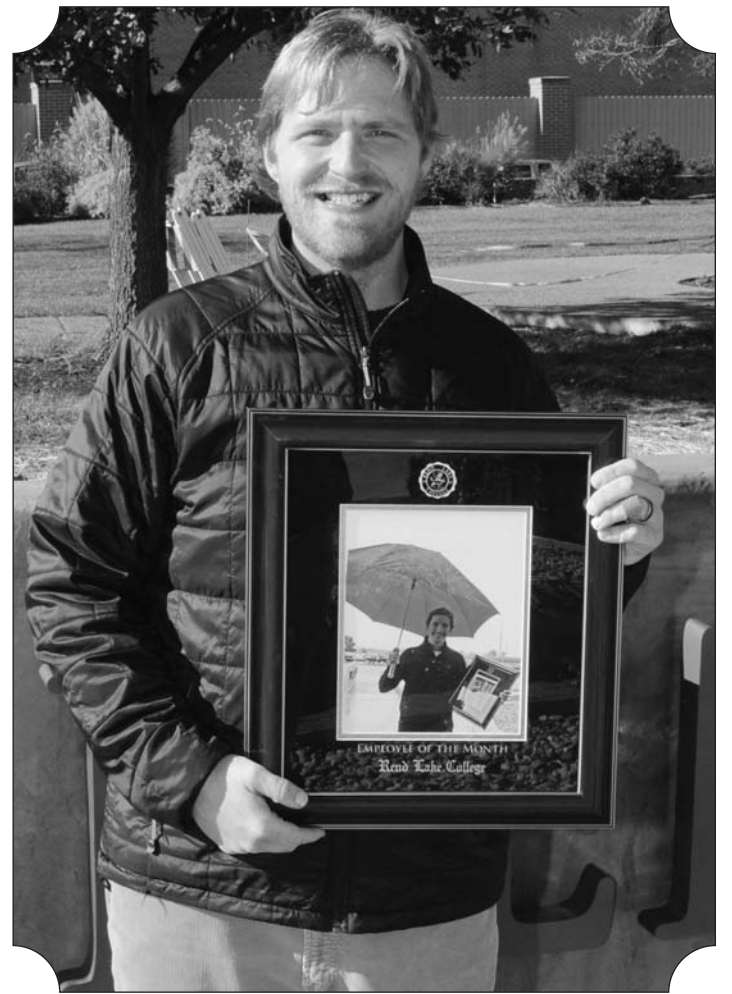
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**IMI Scholarship**

John Davis, CENTER, of Mt. Vernon was awarded an Illinois Mining Institute (IMI) scholarship Thursday in RLC's Coal Mining Training Center for the Fall 2014 semester. Davis is a freshman in RLC's Industrial Electronics and Maintenance Technician program. The 20-year-old said to IMI, "Thanks for giving me this awesome opportunity. I'm not sure where I'll end up in my career, but this will help me get there." Also pictured are RLC Mining Technology Instructors Don McBride, LEFT, and Charles Wingo, RIGHT. (Photo by Nathan Wheeler / RLC Public Information)



**Employee of the Month**

Greg Hollmann, Associate Professor of Political Science, was recently named Rend Lake College's Employee of the Month for November.

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"It's hard for me to pick a favorite memory, because there are a lot of great ones. I truly believe that I would not be close to where I am today without my experiences in the RLC Theatre."  
— Brittanie Graham, LEFT, RLC Theatre alum

**Graham .....**  
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The Mt. Vernon native started her education at RLC in the fall of 2006 with a tuition waiver for the Theatre Department. Appearing in nearly a dozen shows on the RLC stage since the age of 13, the aspiring singer took her experiences as a performer to behind-the-scenes work at ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers); the largest performing rights organization that protects its members' musical copyrights.

"I work in licensing and help collect fees from businesses using music. The fees that are collected are then distributed back to our 510,000 songwriters," said Graham of her day-to-day career. She added the job is a great start to something she hopes to turn into a creative outlet.

"My dream job is to be a professional singer; however, I'm going back and forth with what I'd want to do outside of that. I think it would be great to work artistically within the theatre community that is growing in Nashville. Something I've recently dreamed of doing is becoming someone who signs talent to a label. I'd love to seek out talent," said Graham.

The '08 graduate left RLC with an associate of arts degree with a special emphasis in theatre. No stranger to theatre professor and director Tracey Webb, Graham said the plays and musicals helped teach her how to adapt in the real world.

"When I was in the theatre, I learned how to adjust to different types of people by portraying different characters," said Graham. "I learned very quickly the importance of hard work and determination to reach a deadline, which was often opening night. I also worked back-

stage for the kids' shows at RLC, which helped me learn the value of patience. I don't feel I had that before."

In fact, Graham said it was the close proximity to her home that brought her to RLC, but it was the Theatre Department as a whole that kept her coming back for more classes.

"In the theatre, I learned to work hard, think fast, and persevere when stress is high. I have carried all of these with me to this job," said Graham. "I chose RLC because it was familiar and comfortable. I chose theatre because I started doing shows with Tracey when I was 13 years old, but I fell in love with the department. My acting classes, Tracey, and the entire theatre program were highly beneficial to me and I learned so much from them."

Naming a number of roles she's filled over the years, Graham remembers playing the lead role in "Cinderella," the spring 2008 musical, and Marty in the 2007 spring musical of "Grease" as her favorites. On the side, Graham also does promotional videos and voiceovers for radio ads. Despite the number of activities she's done outside the classroom, some of her favorite memories come from the halls and classrooms of RLC.

"It's hard for me to pick a favorite memory, because there are a lot of great ones," said Graham. "My favorite would have to be the final for one acting class. I played Ouiser Beadroux in a scene from 'Steel Magnolias' along with some good RLC friends. We laughed so much during all of our rehearsals and had such a great time. I truly believe that I would not be close to where I am today without my experiences in the RLC Theatre."

For more information about Rend Lake College, visit [www.rlc.edu](http://www.rlc.edu).

**College Bowl** .....  
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tions] go right along with what we are learning here. We had questions in biology today about stuff I'm learning right now in my class." The regional was stocked with caffeine and food. That's important. "There are always doughnuts there," said Adams. "I always have doughnuts. I

guess I just need sugar ... and coffee." "We are all in college, so we don't pass up free food!" added Overturf. They are all planning to stay on the team next semester. Students interested in getting involved can approach a team member or go see Ervin at his office in the North Oasis. "It's a real fun thing," said Milburn.

"It's all in good fun," Adams said. "We aren't really competitive between us. We are just there to push each other and get better at it." "I think all these guys are kind of a rare breed. It's fun. They are a good group of students," Ervin stated happily about his club. "They are good in science, good in history, really solid in math. I think what they are lacking is art. They are really well-

rounded. Ervin said the person good for college bowl is, simply, a learner. "If you pay attention to the world around you, you kind of get the hang of it," he said. "But if you walk around with your head down all the time and have no idea of what's happening, except on Facebook and Twitter, then, ... you know I think you have to be interested."

**Coming up for RLC athletics**

NA, Ill. (Nov. 26, 2014) — Men's and women's basketball play at Danville Area (Dec. 1), at Southeastern Illinois (Dec. 3) and will host Kaskaskia College Dec. 6, which will

feature the RLC Alumni Game at 11 a.m., followed by the men at 1 p.m. and the women at 3 p.m. For all things athletic at The Lake, visit RLC online at www.rlc.edu/warriors.

**Black Friday** .....  
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time of their employees ... all for a good bargain. This year, the retail chain is advertising a five-day Black Friday sales event, with doors opening at 6 p.m. Thanksgiving night.

The term "Black Friday" was first coined in the 1960s — to mark the kickoff of the Christmas shopping season. Since then, the popularity of the day has grown. Police in Philadelphia came up with the term after complaining about the busy

streets, bustling with motorists and pedestrians. "Black" references stores moving from the "red" to "black" — way back when accounting records were recorded by hand. Red ink symbolized loss and black represented profit. Since the

Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade kicked off in 1924, the day after Thanksgiving has become an unofficial holiday as the start to a busy and bustling holiday shopping season. It has become so popular because retailers began to realize that they could

lure many shoppers into their stores with one-day-only specials and slashed prices. The most sought-after items tend to be electronics and toys. As Thanksgiving approaches, many newspapers and websites will be chocked full of Black

Friday ads, hoping to entice customers to check out their deals. As we recognize this time to be thankful for all of the blessings in our lives, don't let the excitement of great deals take away from what this time and holiday is truly about.

**Economy** .....  
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business in the area and find an RLC grad or someone who has attended to improve their existing skills. We're training our friends and neighbors here, and this Economic Impact Study is affirmation that we're doing something right for them."

Among the biggest benefits of RLC are the opportunities it opens for students who attend and graduate. The EIS states that a 25-year-old program graduate of RLC can expect a total lifetime earnings gain of \$602,000 — a 46 percent increase over those not completing a community college program. Additionally, students who completed their education at RLC in 2011 have seen a \$5,644 increase in earnings over their pre-enrollment wages.

"It's proven that a community college education is both an investment and a savings for those who take advantage of our services," said Wilkerson. "By setting aside time to complete a program or certificate at RLC, students are foregoing earnings, but the rate of return on that investment is well worth it."

In the year following completion, 81 percent of students who graduated in 2011 were employed in Illinois, which is slightly higher than the statewide average of 77 percent. Looking further back, 92 percent of students who graduated in 2005 were employed in Illinois within five years after completion.

RLC students also make up a large portion of taxpayers in the district. Both enrollees and completers from 2003 have paid an estimated \$80 million in state taxes and \$268 million in federal taxes combined through 2012.

The college is among the largest employers in the district and continues to generate additional economic benefits for local communities through expenditures and employment impacts. In 2012, almost 420 faculty and staff

members lived in the district, with a total payroll of almost \$13.2 million.

The college also purchases goods and services from local communities, in addition to income earned and then spent by employees, to further boost the local economy. In 2012, RLC reported \$10.6 million in operating and capital expenditures. As these expenditures mixed into the local economy, RLC's direct and indirect expenditures approached a total of \$19.5 million in value and 500 jobs, according to the study.

"Like me, many of our faculty and staff are Rend Lake graduates themselves who see the value in a post-secondary education and are driven by the need to pass their knowledge on to others," said Wilkerson. "While our employees are a big factor in the local economy, we also work with other businesses for projects, like the recent Pathway to Success or renovations to the art classrooms, and those businesses employ their own people who in turn continue to pump money back out. It's one big cycle that I'm proud to say RLC is a vital part of."

The EIS report also delved into the characteristics of students and program enrollment at RLC to better understand the economic impact. These students attended RLC between 2000 and 2012.

Overall, there has been an increase of about 3,100 enrollments at RLC in credit courses, going from 11,344 in 2000 to 14,469 in 2012. The rate of increase in program completers has also increased, according to the study, from 518 in 2000 to 877 in 2012, a 69.3 percent increase.

The study also found more students enrolling immediately after high school with the declining age of enrollees. The average age of students enrolling in 2000 was 37.3, and the number decreased to 34.7 in 2012. In fact, the percentage of enrollees aged 24 or less increased from 25.3 to

35.2 during those same years. Likewise, the average age of completers also decreased from 27.4 to 26.6 years.

Veteran enrollment has also increased at RLC, with a total of 790 veterans making up 5.5 percent of the total enrollment at RLC in 2012. They were 3.8 percent of the completers in 2012 as well. That same year, RLC was awarded its first of three consecutive Military Friendly School recognition's by veteran-owned business Victory Media. The credit was the result of a survey of approximately 8,000 schools based on their support of military students.

Of all the enrollees, the largest percentage of students (51.5 percent in 2012) indicate that improving skills for a current job as their purpose for attending RLC. Other large groups have been personal interest, followed by those preparing for a future job. Students pursuing an associate degree made up the majority of completers every year from 2000 to 2012.

Three programs represented 80 percent of all enrollments: vocational skills, bac-

calaureate instruction, and transfer instruction. Of those, four broad instructional programs stand out with 88 percent of enrollments in 2012, including health professions and related sciences; liberal arts and sciences, general studies and humanities; engineering-related technologies; and multi- or interdisciplinary sciences.

Health professions improved the most from 11 percent in 2000 to 45 percent in 2012. The same programs also had the largest percent of completers in 2012 at 35 percent, followed by liberal arts and sciences at 24 percent.

Kim Robert, RLC Dean of Allied Health, said the increase in enrollment into the health care programs and certificates is largely due to the growth in options for students and the bigger need in the community to care for an aging population.

"Since 2007, we've added two new Allied Health degrees in the Certified Medical Assistant, which is also a certificate, and the Radiologic Technology programs. We also have seven certificates for more specified instruction," said Robert. "In our district

alone, there is a growing need for people in the health care industry that can't be filled quickly enough, resulting in more of our students getting jobs immediately following graduation. It's wonderful to see the huge growth in attendees and graduates who are getting back out into the workforce."

Modeled after a statewide economic impact analysis of Illinois Community Colleges, the EIS for RLC was commissioned to better understand the return from investing in the college. About 15 individuals from NIU, the ICCB, and the IDCS contributed to developing the report.

RLC is one of 39 community colleges in the state that play a vital role in the educational and workforce preparation of the individuals and communities they serve. RLC

provides high-quality, accessible, and cost-effective educational opportunities for residents in an eight-county area in Southern Illinois that includes portions of Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Perry, Washington, Wayne, White, and Williamson counties.

Founded in 1955 as Mt. Vernon Community College, RLC offers academic and career technical instruction through associate degree, transfer, or certificate programs of study as well as adult and continuing education programs that serve as a gateway to higher education for many community residents, employers, and K-12 students. Courses are offered on the RLC main campus in Ina, at satellite campuses in Pinckneyville and Mt. Vernon, and through online instruction.

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