

On Board

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Brenda Thompson Named Mercer County 2015 Teacher of the Year

Mercer County's 2015-2016 Teacher of the Year could have been any one of the 26 school honorees recognized at the district's annual banquet on May 5th. "To be selected as your school's Teacher of the Year is a great honor and accomplishment," said Superintendent Deborah Akers in her welcoming remarks.

"I would be proud to have any one of you represent Mercer County Schools at the state level," Akers said. However, she continued, "the committee may only nominate one candidate for the state title. Selecting from such a field of dedicated and devoted teachers is very difficult."

This year, the selection committee reviewed the nominations and interviewed the top four candidates. Mercer County Schools' 51st Teacher of the Year is Sun Valley's first grade teacher, Brenda Thompson. Thompson said, "Teachers make dreams possible; I get to meet the kids *where they*

are." Additionally, she stated she was thankful to be a part of such an outstanding group of teachers in Mercer County.

According to Ashley Smith, principal at Sun Valley Elementary, "There is no greater example of Teacher of the Year than Thompson." Smith also says that Thompson serves on multiple committees in a leadership role, serves as a liaison for her school, and voluntarily attends trainings and workshops to keep her knowledge of educational issues current.

Master and mistress of ceremonies for the event were Assistant Superintendent Rick Ball and 2014 Teacher of the Year Susan French. Steve Comer, Principal of Glenwood School, entertained the guests with an array of piano solos.

The following teachers, recognized as their school's 2015-2016 Teachers of the Year, were called forward to receive a framed certificate and be congratulated by members

of the Board of Education: Terry Bailey, Athens; Edie Bennett, Bluefield Intermediate; Rebecca Burnette, Bluewell; Gail Gregory, Brushfork; Brandi Hicks, Ceres; Beth Haynes, Glenwood; Vicky Burks, Lashmeet/Matoaka; Leeann Taylor, Melrose; Holly Browning, Memorial; Donna Hylton, Mercer; Pamela Kinzer, Early Learning Center; Tonya Elliott, Montcalm Elementary; Sebrina Cook, Oakvale; Brandon Bailey, Princeton Primary; Leah Baker, Spanishburg; Janet Burton, Straley; Brenda Thompson, Sun Valley; Angela Damon, Whitethorn; Gail Webb, Bluefield Middle School; Melinda Wyrick, PikeView Middle School; Stephanie Winfrey, Princeton Middle School; Frances Cutlip, Bluefield High School; Ernest Morgan, Montcalm High School; Teresa Barton, PikeView High School; Beth Faulkner, Princeton High School; and Stephanie Bailey, Mercer County Technical Education Center.

"Service to others" was the theme of the 2015 Service Personnel of the Year awards banquet for the Mercer County Schools employees.

Camilla Dawn Green, purchasing secretary at the MCPS Central Office, won the honor as the outstanding service person and will represent Mercer County in the West Virginia state competition. She is a 1982 Montcalm High graduate and has performed exemplary service both as purchasing secretary and assisting with computer operations both at the Central Office and for the county school system.

"I am honored to win this award and pleased to be part of such an outstanding group of employees in our school system," Green said.

Superintendent Dr. Deborah S. Akers spoke of Green, "Dawn has served faithfully in this position for eight years. She is timely, accurate in performance of her duties, and

willing to help anyone who needs assistance, whether that be in our office, or within the system. She is always on the job and a great employee at all times."

Green was one of 33 employees honored with individual plaques and comments of their outstanding qualities for their good service to students, staff, and faculty.

From the elementary level, Kevin Browning, Connie Surface, Latonya Akers, Bertha Stanley, Leslie Masri, Teresa K. Midkiff, Greg Mullins, Holly Saunders, Karen Woolridge, Ora DiMaggio, George Browning, Lisa Lacy, Sherry Hill, Ron Barlow, Patty Hartwell, Cathy Ty-lutki, Terri Tilley, and Barbara Folden were recognized.

Lisa Davis, Alice Matthews, Angelia Brown, and Bryon Etter represented the Intermediate and Middle School winners. From the high schools, Sharon Harmon, Karen

Alvis, Betty J. Powell, and Kim Foley were recognized. Douglas Bowling and Chad Tiller won awards in maintenance and Kenneth "K.D." Hill, Charles "Waylon" Carter, and William E. "Willie" Nelson were recognized from the transportation department.

Leslie Wellman, MCPS Director of Purchasing and Green's immediate supervisor, said "Dawn is a wonderful employee. I am so impressed by her willingness to help others. She has recently enrolled in college, is maintaining an "A" average, and continues to do an excellent job for our school system."

Akers noted, "In my congratulations to all of our outstanding service personnel, I can truly say they personify the following qualities: a strong work ethic, pride in their work, the ability to work well with others, and most importantly, they all share a love of children."

Bluefield High School Girls Basketball Team Writes History

Win or lose the game, the Bluefield High School Girls Basketball Team wrote a new page in the history books for the Beavers. On March 12 at 9:00 A.M., the team boarded the bus to travel the short but exciting drive to the Charleston Civic Center to compete in the Ladies State Basketball Tournament. The Lady Beavers had an opportunity to showcase their skills when they tipped off at 5:30 P.M. against Wyoming East. At a brief school sendoff ceremony that morning, Essence Brown, Senior, says she was "a little nervous, but she wanted to thank you guys [BHS student body] for all your support." Another senior team member, Jessica Hayden, also thanked the students for all the support they had given the girls team this year.

Head Coach, Tony Malmacaci, said, "This is a very big event for us. The

last several years, we have had some very good [girl's] basketball teams that have gone relatively unnoticed. The girls have worked extremely hard, and they deserve the success they have received this year."

Assistant Principal, Anna Lilly, believes it is "epic in any school year when both boys and girls can participate in the state basketball tournament." She, too, is extremely proud of the BHS athletes.

Principal, Mike Collins, explained to the student body that this was the "first time in the history of BHS for the Lady Beavers to earn a spot in the state tournament." He also reminded them that Bluefield was considered to be one of the "great" athletic programs in the state and that he was extremely proud of BHS's Lady Beavers because they have worked hard to "take care

of business."

Joe Turner, Assistant Superintendent of Schools for Mercer County, says, "Congratulations to the Lady Beavers. I know all of Mercer County was cheering for you."

Dr. Deborah Akers, Superintendent, says she is proud of the BHS Girl's Basketball team's accomplishments.

Team members include Abigail Atwell, Courtney Auville, Teryn Auville, Essence Brown, Katelyn Browning, Jia Coppola, Emaleigh Gallinger, Jessica Hayden, Carly Helton, Dani Janutolo, Kacie Kennedy, Alyssa Lester, Alexi Trigg, and Sparrow Void. Team Managers are Jamaikah Wallace, Anthony Riley, and Haley McCullen. Head Coach is Tony Malmacaci, and assistant coaches are Rick Lester, Kip McPeak, and Larry Lester.

Dictionary Project Ceremony Held at Mercer School

During a 9:00 A.M. ceremony on May 14, Mercer School third grade students received personal copies of *Webster's Student Dictionary*. Although only one school hosted the Dictionary Project, every third grade student in Mercer County received a dictionary, compliments of a unique collaboration between Bluefield State College, Concord University, and the Bluefield and Princeton Rotary Clubs.

Now in its ninth year, the project has awarded over 5,600 books to Mercer County students for their personal use at home. The project's partners believe it is a worthwhile investment.

Following the words of welcome and a brief history lesson on Noah Webster from Teresa Russell - Data and Information Specialist for Mercer County Schools, Dr. Kendra Boggess - President of Concord University, Mr. Jim Nelson - Assistant to the President/Director of Institutional and Media Relations, and Mrs. Candy Stanley - Princeton Rotary Club each spoke to over 120 third grade students at Mercer School. Dr. Boggess explained to the students the importance of education and being a lifelong learner. Mr. Nelson described and demonstrated how the students could say the same concept but use different words. Mrs. Stanley then talked to the

students about developing a love for reading and a love for learning new words.

Mrs. Kelli Stanley, Principal of Mercer School, said, "We were extremely pleased to be able to host the Dictionary Project Presentation. The students of Mercer School are thrilled with their personal dictionaries. We truly believe the dictionaries will be useful for years to come."

Dr. Deborah Akers, Superintendent, would like to thank Concord University, Bluefield State College, and the Princeton and Bluefield Rotary Clubs for their generous dictionary donation to Mercer County Schools.

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT . . .

Crystal Leedy, Social Worker
SFC Michael Pedri, JROTC Instructor, Bluefield High School
Jill Roy, Secretary, Special Education, Central Office
Michael Morgan, Principal, Glenwood School, 2015-2016
MSG Robert D. Riggs, JROTC Instructor, PikeView High School
David Lee, Principal, Princeton Middle School, 2015-2016
Philip Brad Carr, Assistant Principal, Princeton Senior High School, 2015-2016



From Science Fair to Book Battles to Young Writers, Mercer County Plays Host to the March Madness Month of Academic Competitions

In schools all across Mercer County, students have been preparing for competitions. Whether it was conducting research for science projects, computing math problems, writing stories or reading novels, Mercer County students were gearing up for competition month.

For the first Science and Engineering Fair to be held in Mercer County in over twenty years, students carefully prepared projects using scientific procedures to conduct experiments, wrote abstracts, created displays, and prepared oral presentations lasting no more than five minutes to present to a panel of judges. Based on a hypothesis, each student or group of students had to create data to refute or support their hypothetical statement using scientific methods. Two divisions, Junior and Senior, competed in the categories of Animal Science, Behavioral Science, Chemistry, Computer Science, Earth Science, Engineering and Energy, Environmental Science, Health Science, Mathematical Science, Physics, and Plant Science. First place winners were invited to compete at the state level held at Fairmont College. Students who placed first, second and third were awarded medals. Bluefield High School Students, Jacob Smith and Randall Maxey placed second in the state for their Plant Science Project entitled *Hydro-phonics of Pea Plants*. County first place winners are listed below.

Math Students had the opportunity to compete at the regional level and were invited to compete in the state competition held at Concord University in late April. In grades four through twelve, the top students in regional competition were as follows: Grade Four – Samvat Yadav and Samuel Chambers; Grade Five – Josiah Malachowsky and Gracie Meadows; Grade Six – Jared Grubb, Hannah Jones, and Ben Chambers; Grade Seven – Kayli Mann; Grade Eight – Ryan Burks; Grade Nine – Nathan Cadle; and Grades Ten through Twelve – Sami Rana, Tanner Venneri, and Sami Zein.

Elementary and Middle School students competed in double competition eliminations on separate days for the annual Battle of the Books. This competition was developed to improve long-term sustained reading comprehension. In round one, students had to answer each question with the name of an author. In round two, they answered with the title of a book. By round three and four, the questions began centering on characters or content. Students who participated were presented trophies. The elementary second place team was Sun Valley Elementary whose team members consisted of Katherine Webb, Madison O'Dell, Keyshawn Phillips, Alyssa Bennett, Victoria Meadows, Grace Hutchinson, and Coaches Dona Scarbro and Pam Skeens. The first place elementary team, Bluefield Intermediate School, members included Luke Brown, Jackson Ward, Derek Modad, Sophia Quesenberry, Ashton Bailey, Robert Williams, Dante Russo and Coach Karen Sowder. The second place middle school group from Princeton Middle consisted of team members Amethyst Cochran, Makayla Mills, Alyson Robinett, Caroline Malachowsky, Laken Dye, Hannah Cooke, and Coach Jessica Morgan. First place team members from PikeView Middle School were Bethany Mays, Hannah Jones, Riley Tucker, Miranda Cales, Madison Bennett, Victoria Shrewsbury, and Coach Melinda Wyrick.

The final academic competition, Young Writers, included students who wrote narrative stories in Grades One through Grade Twelve. The county winners in these grades competed against each other to become the Division Winners. Divisional Winners have the opportunity to progress to the state competition. In Division I, second grader Avaree Davis from Athens Elementary won for her story entitled "The Pumpkin that Saved the Princess." Division II winner was Autumn Bane from Melrose Elementary for "The Paper Boat." Sixth Grader, Naomi Gills, from Montcalm Elementary won with "My Special Friend" in Division III; while eighth grader, Laken Saddler from Glenwood School wrote "Make People Smile" to win Division IV. Brady O'Saile from Princeton Senior High School won Division V with his story entitled "Protector." Division VI also went to a Princeton High School student, Shannon Lane, for her story "Samuel."

The Mercer County Board of Education, Dr. Deborah Akers – Superintendent, and all the administrators at the above referenced schools would like to take this opportunity to thank their students and teachers for all their hard work in preparing for these competitions.

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Science Fair Winners

Junior Division:

Shawn Bennett--Animal Science
Christina Hale-- Behavioral Science
Andi Graham--Chemistry
Noah Taylor--Computer Science
Bradford Hurt-- Earth Science
Ethan Hendrick-- Engineering and Energy
Rebecca Pruet/Skylur Rice --Environmental Science
Raegan Southers--Health Science
Kyndall Lambert--Mathematical Science
Jayden Doty--Physics
Samvat Yadav--Plant Science

Middle Division:

Victoria Terry/Madison Parsons--Animal Science
Riley Tucker/Oliver Morgan--Behavioral Science
Zachary Herndon /Gavin Lail--Chemistry
Jamir Blevins-- Engineering and Energy
Madison Griffith/Chiana Clough--Environmental Science
Bobby Thornton--Health Science
Hayden Morgan/Carey Nelson--Mathematical Science
Matthew Lilly/Logan Krauss--Physics
Kimberly Turner--Plant Science

Senior Division:

Le Trae Wilbon/Dajzha Rash--Behavioral Science
Shomonique Hankins/ Amber Russo--Chemistry
Josh Dudding--Engineering and Energy
Mary Shephard/Stephanie Lilly--Health Science
Cole Honaker--Physics
Jacob Smith/Randall Maxey --Plant Science

Heads Up Mercer County App Available to Public

The City of Bluefield, the Bluefield Police Department, in conjunction with Mountain State Computer & Networking Solutions (MSCNS) is proud to formally announce the launch of "Heads-Up Mercer County," a uniform emergency and disaster notification system available as a smart phone application.

"Heads-Up Mercer County is another wonderful, new tool that can be used on a personal device to better communicate with citizens," said City Manager Dane Rideout. "Not only is it beneficial for the City of Bluefield, but for agencies across the county. Our thanks go to the Bluefield Police Department for leading the charge to have this app available to the residents of Mercer County."

Mercer County Schools will utilize the App as a

parent information notification device in conjunction with our School Messenger phone service notification, our posting of delays and closings on the West Virginia Department of Education website as well as the Mercer County Schools website, and our local television and radio notifications.

The public launch took place on Tuesday, May 26, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. in the Board Room at City Hall at 200 Rogers Street.

Heads-Up Mercer County is a single app that provides users with critical information in the event of an emergency or disaster incidents. It also provides information in multiple areas such as school closings, boil water advisories, major traffic accidents, and other such emergency situations. It was developed based on the model

of "Heads-Up Huntington" with the assistance of MSCNS.

"Working with the folks in Huntington to develop this app has been a great experience," said Police Chief Dennis Dillow. "We are excited to bring this great resource, developed in West Virginia, here to Mercer County."

The app is a one-of-a-kind product and is a custom scripted software application. App users have the ability to select which notifications are important to them, as well as the data entry delegate to discern the priority level at which information is sent out. The app is free to the public, and is available in the Google Play Store and Apple's App Store. To download the App, via Internet, please visit www.headsupapp.io.

Contact your rep.....

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Kudos to . . .

- Shannon Honaker, Bluefield Middle School—110% Club
- Gail Webb, Bluefield Middle School-WVVA November, 2014 Teacher of the Month
- Gwen Miller, MCTEC, entries in the 2014-2015 Statewide High School Business Plan competition
- Aleta Jo Crotty, Mercer Elementary School—recognized by WVAHPERD
- Keith Bowling, PikeView Middle School—recognized by WVAHPERD
- Sandy Morefield, PikeView Middle School—recognized by WVAHPERD
- Jane Miles, Bluewell Elementary School—recognized by WVAHPERD
- Sara Ballangee, Princeton Middle School—recognized by WVAHPERD
- Melissa Lanter, Ceres Elementary, wrote and received a DonorsChoose.org Grant
- Tony Mallamaci, Bluefield High School, named the Bluefield Daily Telegraph/Pocahontas Coal Association Coach of the Year
- Jean Davis, Mercer Elementary, wrote and received a DonorsChoose.org Grant
- JoAnn Schorsch, Bluefield Intermediate School, received funding for her project called "May the Birds Be With Us"
- Shawn Williams, Bluefield High School, WVVA March, 2015 Teacher of the Month
- Ashley Shaw, Montcalm Elementary School, was named by Arch Coal Foundation as one of twelve outstanding West Virginia classroom teachers who are recipients of the prestigious Arch Coal Teacher Achievement Award
- Tina Hayworth, Bluefield Intermediate School, wrote and received a DonorsChoose.org Grant
- Rebecca Wright, Mercer Elementary School, organized the Children's Home Society Sleep Out
- Racine Stefancic, Oakvale Elementary, wrote and received a DonorsChoose.org Grant
- Racine Stefancic, Oakvale Elementary—achieved National Board Certification
- Angela Wilson, Athens Elementary—achieved National Board Certification

