

# Transitions

## **Transition of Services Update** By Dr. David Ayersman, Chief Information Officer

### **Networking and Phones**



The first major phase of the networking project has been completed. The New River network is now installed at Beaver, Beckley, Lewisburg, Princeton, and Summersville (both locations).

In the past, New River actually shared a single network with Bluefield State College (which BSC administered). Admittedly, there were a few initial "bumps" with the new network after it went live. However, those issues have been resolved. We regret any inconvenience to users, but quite honestly, the project was not a simple one.

Bringing six locations online simultaneously posed a number of challenges. It was not as simple as plugging in a new wire on each campus. Prior to the change, AntiSpam and AntiVirus email filtering services were provided by WVNET, but now they are not. Bluefield State College provided critical DNS and DHCP services, but now they are provided by New River (these services allow your computer to access the Internet). The protective firewall that allows or denies traffic into and out of our network had been provided by Bluefield State College. We now provide our own firewall. While changing the three existing sites (Beckley, Lewisburg and Summersville) from one network to another would have been challenging enough, three brand new sites were added to our network at the very same time (Beaver, Princeton and the second location in Summersville were not part of our original network).

With a very limited New River IT staff, every member of our team played an important role in completing this part of the project. Most critical were Robert Davis and Steve Garlow. We also relied heavily upon the assistance provided by our vendor, Alpha Technologies. Extensive coordination with Fibernet (our Internet Service Provider) and WVNET was also required. Communicating with so many individuals, across six locations, off and on over a period of a few weeks and then finally completing these tasks over a single weekend was quite an accomplishment for New River. In addition, completing this project during the first few weeks of the fall term made it even more challenging. The original plan was to complete the project prior to the term beginning, but unexpected delays prevented us from achieving that goal.

The next phases of this project are now underway. They include (a) installation of a Main Control Unit in order to more fully utilize the administration and scheduling features that directly improve our use of the IVN systems and (b) implementing a new Voice over IP phone system that will replace all existing landline phones (while also reducing our monthly phone bill). These are not small projects either, so your continued patience and understanding are appreciated. We'll do our best to (a) not disrupt services, (b) provide sufficient training for the new phone system, and (c) continue to make improvements to these services.

While the network speeds have increased at every location as a result of completing this phase of the project, please realize that for now, connections to the Internet at most campus locations are temporary. Within the next 30 days or so the conversion will be made from T-1 connections (1.5 Mbps) to fiber connections (10 Mbps). Everyone is eager to see those speed increases! Unlike other parts of the project, this planned change is expected to be rather simple and will involve practically no network downtime.

At the next scheduled Staff Council meeting (September 22), sample phones will be available for folks to review. Doug Tate, the President and CEO of Alpha Technologies, will be on hand to provide an overview of the new phone features, differences among the models of phones and to address any questions.

### Help Desk

The Help Desk has been moved from the Beckley Campus to the Raleigh County Campus, but the same phone number is still in effect (304-929-6725). With a single phone line, assistance could be provided to only one caller at a time, but moving to the PHEC made it possible to add a second phone line (304-256-0279). Admittedly, the current phone service makes it difficult to reach someone. The voicemail options are awkward, phones don't "roll over" to a second line when the first is busy, and there is no way to group lines together so that staff at different locations might all be able to contribute to receiving the calls. Fortunately, the new phone system will resolve each of these issues. Until then, adding the second number is a notable improvement.

Even though there is local IT support on every campus, at most campuses this might be just a single person. Of course there are times when that person might be away from campus or even out for the day, so where do you turn for IT support? Nearly two years ago we created a centralized Help Desk for the College. Eric Tucker is the Help Desk Manager. He supervises a staff of three part-time employees (Amy Wood, Eric Cannetti, and Patrick Vance). Collectively, they provide Help Desk coverage from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday and on Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.. If you can't reach them by phone, email them at [itsupport@newriver.edu](mailto:itsupport@newriver.edu) and they'll be able to assist you.



Amy Wood assists a caller at the New River Help Desk



**New officers of the Classified Staff Council are (L-R) Lori Midkiff, vice chair; Mary Igo, chair; and Melinda Ford, secretary/treasurer.**

Photo by Susie Atkins

## CLASSIFIED STAFF COUNCIL ELECTS OFFICERS

The Classified Staff Council met on Friday, August 28, 2009 on the Beckley Campus to elect officers of the executive council. Mary Igo, Workforce Education program specialist on the Nicholas County Campus, was re-elected chairman. Lori Midkiff, executive secretary to the president, was elected vice-chairman. Lori will serve in this position until June 30, 2011. Melinda Ford, supervisor of student accounts on the Greenbrier Valley Campus, was elected secretary/treasurer for the same term.

The council also discussed plans to revise its by-laws and constitution. A committee has been formed to review similar documents from other institutions and make recommendations about the necessary changes.

The members and guests present for the August meeting expressed a desire for additional trainings like the one offered at the staff field day in March. They recommended a similar format with additional training topics to include general process training, purchasing, travel, Banner, and computer training to better utilize Excel, Outlook, and Word.

Got news? Please send information and photos of events on your campus to Barbara Elliott, [bellott@newriver.edu](mailto:bellott@newriver.edu).

## Classes Bring the Community to our Campuses

Workforce Education offers a wide variety of community education classes and workshops that attract a broad range of participants of all ages and interests. From Zumba in Beckley, to Tai Chi in Lewisburg, to art classes in Summersville, there is something to appeal to everyone. In addition, New River's Elderhostel program attracts hundreds of participants from across the country to experience the beauty, history and culture of West Virginia. Here's a sampling of some recent and upcoming classes.



**A Tai Chi workshop in early September was so successful that the participants have decided to continue meeting on a weekly basis.**

Photo by Lynn McKinney

**Participants in an Elderhostel program in August got an up-close-and-personal look at the art of bee keeping.**

Photo by Lynn McKinney



**Karen Vuranch will present a one-woman performance as French chef extraordinaire Julia Child in the auditorium of the Greenbrier Valley Campus at 3 p.m. on Saturday, Oct.10 following the TOOT festival in Lewisburg. The cost is \$10 (New River employees receive a 50 percent discount). Due to space limitations, please pre-register by September 30. Call 304.647.6570 or 304.793.6101 for more information or to register.**

## Message from the President

By Dr. Ted D. Spring

New River has recently finalized an agreement with the Summersville Public Library for the college to remunerate the library for specific services it provides to New River students and faculty beyond services which would normally be provided to the public.

Under the new agreement, New River will pay the library to stay open additional hours to meet the needs of the students and for the use of classroom space to handle overflow classes. Because of an anticipated increase of the use of the library by New River students, the college will provide student workers to help with extended hours of operation.

Because New River does not have its own library on the Nicholas County Campus, the services of the Summersville Public Library are an invaluable resource for us, and we are pleased to extend our cooperative relationship that has existed for many years. With the tremendous growth in enrollment on our Nicholas County Campus, the need for services is greater than ever, and we are fortunate that the library board and staff are willing to partner with us to meet that need.

### How to Handle Media Inquiries

Calls from the news media should always be referred to Barbara Elliott in the Public Relations Office at (304) 929-6727, or internally at extension 387. She will find out what the reporter needs and help connect them to the person most qualified to answer their questions.

Reporters sometimes show up on campus unannounced. If that happens in Beckley, refer them to Barbara for assistance. If she is not available, contact Libby Belcher at (304) 929-.5464, internal ext. 243. If you are on another campus, notify Barbara that the reporter is there and she will advise you how to proceed. If neither Barbara nor Libby is available, the Campus Dean should be notified. Whatever the circumstance, respond promptly and courteously when the media calls or visits. We are fortunate to have a very good relationship with reporters in our area, and they appreciate our efforts to be responsive to their needs.