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# Three Rivers College Moves Forward on Sports Complex

JANUARY 21ST 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Three Rivers College Moves Forward on Sports Complex

**Poplar Bluff, Missouri** - The Board of Trustees for Three Rivers College has approved the college's proposal for the Libla Family Sports Complex, a new 3,000 seat, 60,000 square foot gymnasium on Three Rivers' Poplar Bluff Campus. The new facility, which was approved at the January Board of Trustees meeting, will replace the Bess Activity Center as the new home of the college's Raiders and Lady Raiders basketball teams.

"This is something we've been waiting on for a long time, and I feel very blessed that we're receiving this upgrade to our facilities," said Gene Bess, coach of the Three Rivers Raiders basketball team. "It's a great moment for our community to have such a fine sports venue for our teams."

The Libla Family Sports Complex will become the new home of Gene Bess Court, and will also be convertible into a three-court facility suitable for holding practices and regional high school basketball tournaments. The Sports Complex will also incorporate training and locker room facilities for the Raiders and Lady Raiders, office space, and a Three Rivers Athletics Hall of Fame.

"Everyone's very excited about this new facility, and I think it's going to be a beautiful place to play basketball in," said Jeff Walk, coach for the Lady Raiders women's basketball team. "It just goes to show you the kind of support that Three Rivers, and the entire community here, puts forward for these teams, and our athletes."

The Sports Complex will cost an estimated \$10.5 million. Over \$5.5 million in private funds will be used towards the construction of the new facility, including a significant seven-figure donation from the Libla family. The project is anticipated to go to bid within 30 days of its approval, with Huffman Construction serving as the construction management firm for the project. The college plans to start work on the building as soon as possible after the bid process is completed.

“We’re so proud of our athletics teams at Three Rivers, especially the long list of achievements that Coach Bess has given to us during his decades here as coach of the Raiders,” said Dr. Wesley Payne, President of Three Rivers College. “As we approach our institution’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it’s our turn to give back to our coaches and athletes, and provide them a home that will last for the next 50 years of Raiders athletics.”

Three Rivers College is committed to contributing to the quality of life in Southeast Missouri with quality, affordable higher education opportunities and community services that support and encourage the economic, civic, and cultural vitality of the region. For more information about college and workforce programs and upcoming events, visit [trcc.edu](http://trcc.edu).

Three Rivers College has approved a proposal for the Libla Family Sports Complex, a 60,000 square-foot, 3,000 seat gymnasium that will serve as the new home for the college’s basketball and women’s basketball teams.

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# Teacher Words Matter

JANUARY 04TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Teacher Words Matter

**Poplar Bluff, Missouri** - A student wrote a heartfelt essay about her school janitor and won \$500 plus an all-expense paid trip for the pair to attend the Missouri High School Football Championship in St. Louis.

Poplar Bluff High School junior Katie Huskey and long-time custodian Jan Ethridge enjoyed the Fort Osage versus Chaminade game together on Saturday, Nov. 28, receiving on-the-field recognition and a behind-the-scenes tour of Edward Jones Dome.

Huskey said she chose Ethridge in the Missouri National Education Association-sponsored writing contest, Teacher Words Matter, because of the custodian's welcoming smile and positive influence on the lives of cohorts of high schoolers

"It's not big things that matter. She inspires us to do little things every day," Huskey said of Ethridge. "Her job title is technically custodian, but that's not why she comes to work every day."

Ethridge, who has been employed by the R-I school district for 17 years, explained that students seem to confide in her, so she takes it upon herself to offer them some guidance.

"It's me being a Christian. This is my training field," Ethridge stated. "Just saying 'Hi' to a child, you would be surprised how it brightens their day."

Top photo: Katie Huskey (left) is pictured in the counseling office with her inspiration, Jan Ethridge, affectionately known as Miss Jan. Bottom photo: One of ten contest winners, Katie Huskey (second from the right) gets recognized during halftime at the Edward Jones Dome.

Photos and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Coordinator of Poplar Bluff R-I School District.

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## Scott Dill Hired to Succeed Hon as Superintendent

DECEMBER 19TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

### Scott Dill Hired to Succeed Hon as Superintendent

**Poplar Bluff, Missouri** - Scott Dill, a public educator of 20 years experience, half of which has been in administration was hired on Thursday, December 17, 2015 by the R-I Board of Education to lead Poplar Bluff Schools into its new facilities and beyond.

Since 2012, Dill has served as superintendent of Houston Schools, a rural district 120 miles northwest, where he began as middle school principal. He was employed for a decade prior as a library media specialist at Macks Creek Schools in Central Missouri.

“I am both honored and humbled to have been selected by the board to lead the Poplar Bluff R-I School District,” said Dill, who received a regional award from the Missouri Association of Administrators last year for his successful superintendency. “I eagerly anticipate the challenges and opportunities inherent to this position.”

Dill is in the final stages of his dissertation toward a doctorate in educational leadership from Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, where he also received his master's in educational administration along with a specialist degree. He earned his bachelor's in teaching from Missouri State University in Springfield.

“Working together, in a collaborative partnership, I am confident we will continue the tradition of excellence, which is a hallmark of this storied school and community,” Dill continued, exclaiming: “Onward and upward!”

With assistance from the Missouri School Boards' Association starting in September, a series of focus groups were held for the community and staff to determine the qualities desired in the next superintendent. A retired Missouri educator of over four decades, Dr. Jerry Waddle, who led the search that resulted in the hiring of Chris Hon in 2010, again served as the district's MSBA consultant.

According to the results of a survey completed by over 400 patrons, more than three quarters of respondents were interested in an individual with effective experience running a district. In addition, more than half of those surveyed – mostly parents and teachers, favored a leader with familiarity navigating school construction. In 2013, Dill helped drive Houston's first victorious bond issue in 14 years, resulting in a multi-million dollar campus renovation.

“With the new building projects, we are on our way to becoming a preeminent district,” stated John Scott, school board president. “I know that our new superintendent will build on our recent improvements and help guide us to the next level.”

Before an agreement was reached with Dill, the seven-member school board narrowed a field of a dozen applicants to the five strongest, and interviewed the finalists meticulously with help from a search committee. The top three were brought back in for a second round of screening.

“The combination of community and teacher participation I thought was dynamic in both diversity in background and experience,” reflected Jeff Shawan, a member of the 12-person search committee. “The board listened carefully to our comments and engaged us and invited us to participate beyond just simply filling out a scorecard. They should be lauded.”

Dill will assume the helm on July 1, two months before construction on the historic buildings plan is scheduled for completion. Hon, who announced his eventual retirement

from public education one year ago, said over the next several months he is committed to involving Dill on any major decisions that will have a direct impact on the 2016/17 school year.

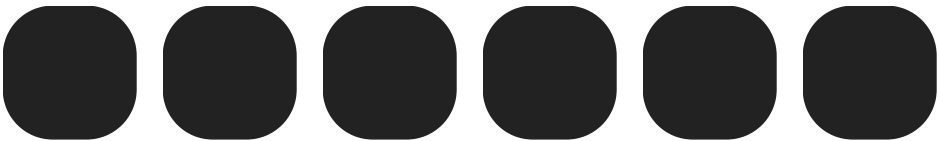
“Mr. Dill has the enthusiasm and vision to help our school and community achieve our most important goal: to provide our children the best education available,” Scott concluded. “I look forward to the next chapter at Poplar Bluff R-I.”

Submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Coordinator  
Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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# National Honor Society Fall Induction

DECEMBER 17TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

National Honor Society Fall Induction

**Poplar Bluff, Missouri** - Several Poplar Bluff High School students were inducted into the National Honor Society during the fall ceremony on Thursday, Dec. 10, in the Administrative Building.

The new inductees included seniors Chase Burch, Zachary Cambron, Chang Chi, Steven Haley, Kailee Kanell, Zachery Lawrence and Mallory Pierce. They join their 22 classmates who made the pledge during the spring induction, each signing a PBHS register that goes back to 1941, 20 years after the national organization was founded.

Selection is based on GPA, service, leadership and character by majority vote of a five-member faculty council appointed annually by the high school principal, according to chapter adviser Paul Conover, social studies teacher.

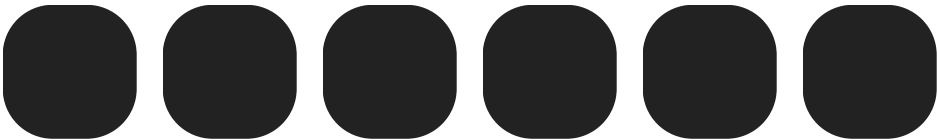
(Standing, left to right) NHS vice president Christian Cmehil-Warn and president Jackson Rideout perform the candle ceremony for inductees Chang Chi, Zachary Cambron, Chase Burch, Zachery Lawrence, Kailee Kanell and Steven Haley, before Principal Mike Kiehne (seated) awards the certificates. Not present was student Mallory Pierce.

Submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Coordinator  
Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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# Poplar Bluff Students Named to All-State Choir

DECEMBER 10TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Poplar Bluff Students Named to All-State Choir

**Poplar Bluff, Missouri** - Poplar Bluff High School seniors Mathew Pickard (left) and Christian Cmehil-Warn were selected for the All-State Choir on Saturday, November 14, 2015 at Cape Central High School.

The quartet auditions were held after the All-District Choir performance, which featured the duo along with Alyssa Cook, Hannah Earley, Hunter Ellis, Natalie Hunsaker, Ariel Judd, Shelby Ross and Hunter Turner.

Conducted by co-director of choral studies Dr. Julie Yu-Oppenheim of Kansas State University, the All-State Choir will perform on Saturday, January 30, 2015 in Tan-Tar-A at Osage Beach.

Photo and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Coordinator, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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