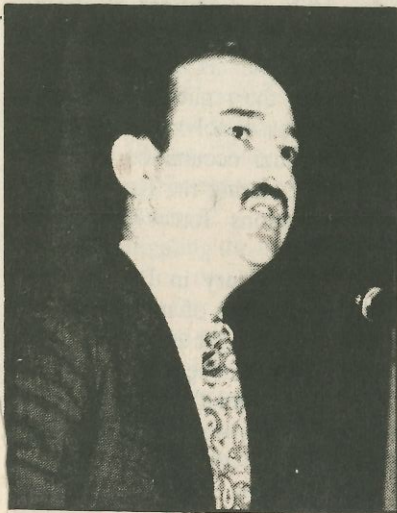


# Hopkins: Technical college will expand offerings



**GEORGE HOPKINS**  
Supports technical college

By **SUSAN SCANTLIN**  
Executive Editor

State Sen. George Hopkins of Malvern explained the evolutionary process that will occur in Ouachita Vocational Technical School's transition from a vo-tech to technical college.

Hopkins spoke to the Malvern Rotary Club Wednesday about the changes that will be required to upgrade Ouachita Vo-Tech to include a two-year associate degree program.

Ouachita Vo-Tech, through separate legislation sponsored by Hopkins, was added to a list of 11 state vo-tech schools who are seeking technical college status. The legislation now awaits the required signatures, including the governor's, to complete the legislative process.

Effective July 1, the technical colleges will be under the jurisdiction of the state Board of Higher Education. A local board, appointed by the gover-

nor, will control the operations of the school at the local level. Currently, Ouachita Vo-Tech is governed by the state Vocational Education Board.

The General Assembly is considering a one-half percent increase in the corporate income tax on net profit above \$100,000 to fund the improvements and restructuring of the vo-tech system. The restructuring plan will not take place without the additional state revenue, Hopkins said.

"All of this will be fruitless unless we pass the tax, but it has the support of all of the major corporations."

The technical colleges will continue to offer vocational-technical programs and will also offer freshman and sophomore level college courses as part of a two-year degree program. The college level work will be transferrable to any four-year institution.

Hopkins stressed the vocational program would

not be hampered by the technical college program.

"The foundation of technical education is already laid at Ouachita Vo-Tech and that will not change. We are just adding to the course offerings. We won't be disturbing that program, we will just be adding to it."

One of the first elements added at the school will be a program for remedial education. Students who score below the minimum ACT score required by colleges must take remedial courses to upgrade their educational skills.

The remedial work does not count for college credit hours. Hopkins said one-half of the students in Arkansas entering colleges and universities require some remediation. A night program could also be developed, depending on the needs of the students.

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