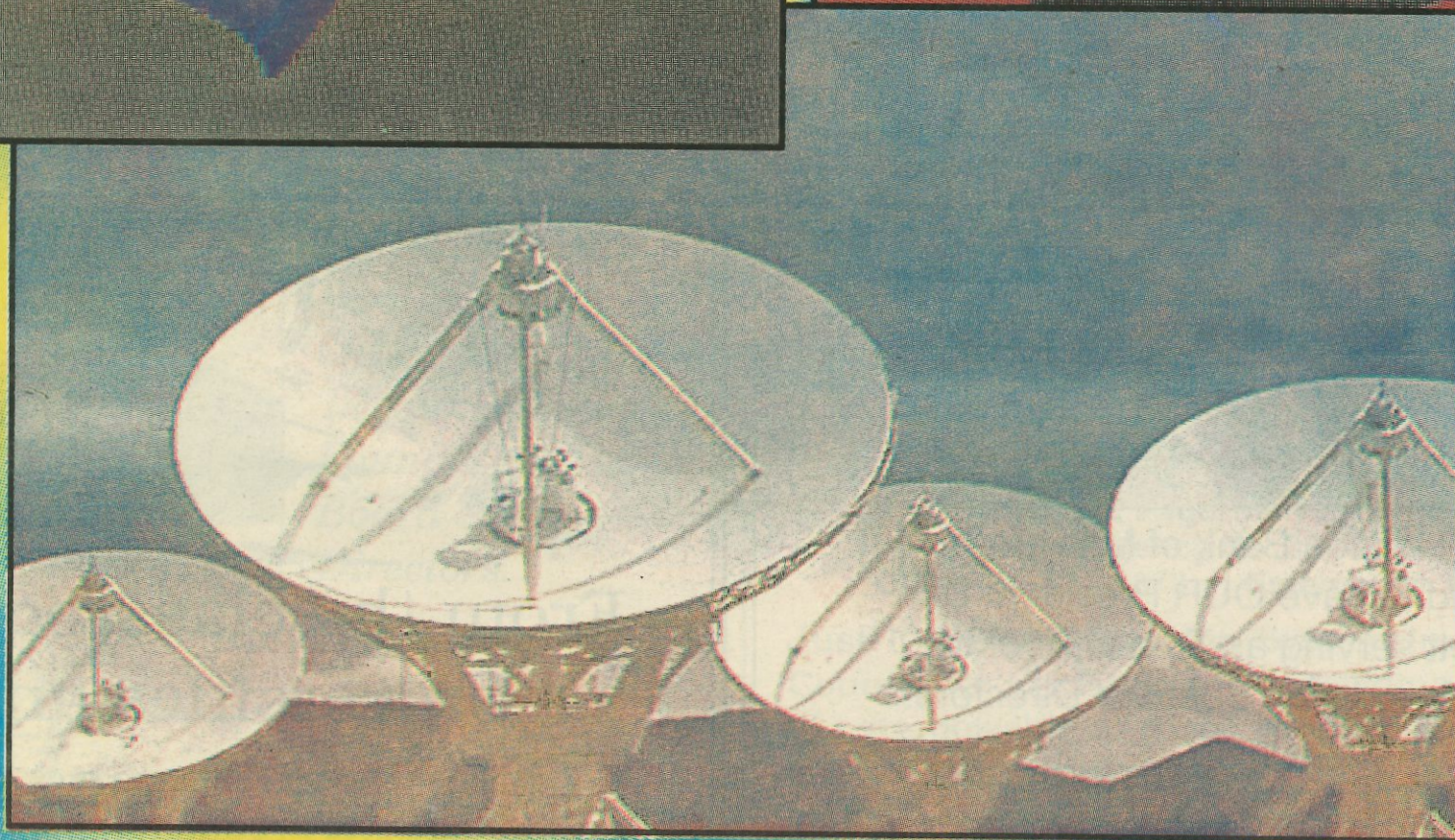


Look to the Future at OTC



Accreditation gives added credibility to OTC

By DON DAILEY
Staff Writer

When the Arkansas Department of Higher Education decreed that all technical colleges in the state had to become accredited by 1999, Ouachita Technical College didn't waste any time. It got to work on an accreditation plan that put it among the first three technical colleges in the state to achieve accreditation.

An official from the ADHE said OTC could never improve enough to gain accreditation from the North Central Association, the school accrediting body for the central United States.

OTC took some of



Daily Record photo- Dailey

Ouachita Technical College has been accredited by the North Central Association.

the sting out of those Bluff and Ozarka the first three technical words by joining Pines Technical College in colleges accredited in Technical College in Pine Melbourne in becoming only three years' time.

OTC President

Please see OTC, page 3



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OTC

Continued from page 2

Ken Martin said being accredited shows other colleges and students that OTC is a legitimate college.

"(Being accredited) says to your peers that you meet a certain set of standards and you are on a par with those peers," Martin said in October after an NCA inspection of the campus.

Not only did the college become accredited, it was accredited for the maximum of five years.

The first step in the long process was a self-evaluation by

the college's administrators. Each program was studied for strengths and weaknesses. Flaws were exposed and plans to fix them formulated.

The self-study was drafted and redrafted to perfection and then presented to NCA. NCA was so impressed with OTC's self-study document, it is now using it as an example of how a self-study should be put together.

During the last week in September, a four-member evaluation team from NCA came to the campus for a firsthand look at the college. The team met with the board of trustees, administrators, students, employees and Malvern citizens. The team came away with

a favorable impression and recommended OTC for full accreditation.

OTC Board of Trustees Chairman Steve Faris gives the credit for OTC's quick accreditation to the administration, faculty, students and board of trustees.

"They've worked very hard to make that college an accredited institution," he said.

Martin said a big reason for OTC being accepted was the planned Academic Learning Resource Center Complex, a 24,000 square foot facility currently on the drawing board.

"We would not have been accredited without that building behind us," Martin said.

The building will be

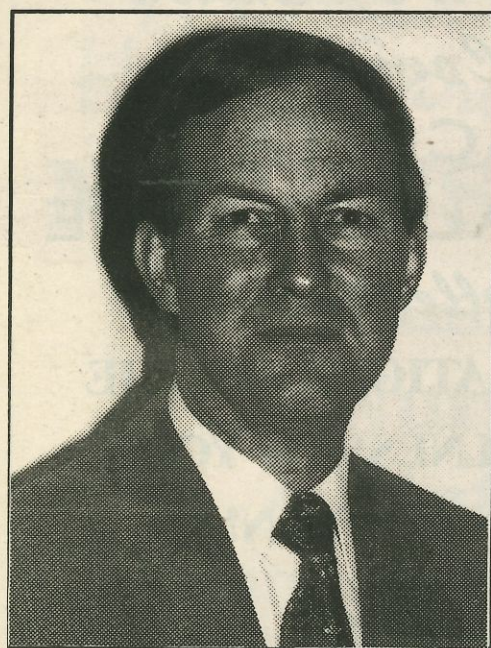
funded by a half-cent city sales tax that voters passed in July 1993.

"It not only showed that we were going to have a college here, but that the community supported us," Martin said.

In January, Martin and Enrollment Director June Prince went to NCA headquarters in Chicago to make a formal presentation about the college to a review committee. The full commission met in February and gave OTC its final approval.

The accreditation process will start anew in five years, but the process won't be nearly as difficult since OTC knows what to expect and will have everything on file, Martin said.

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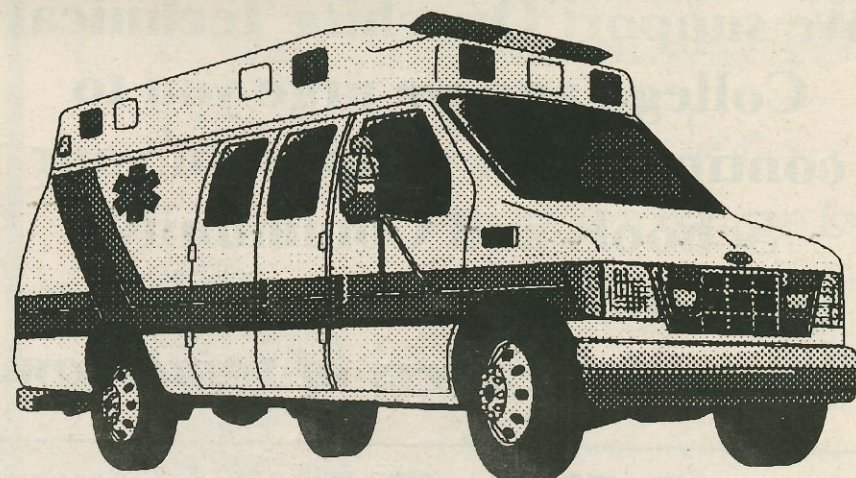


Don Walsh

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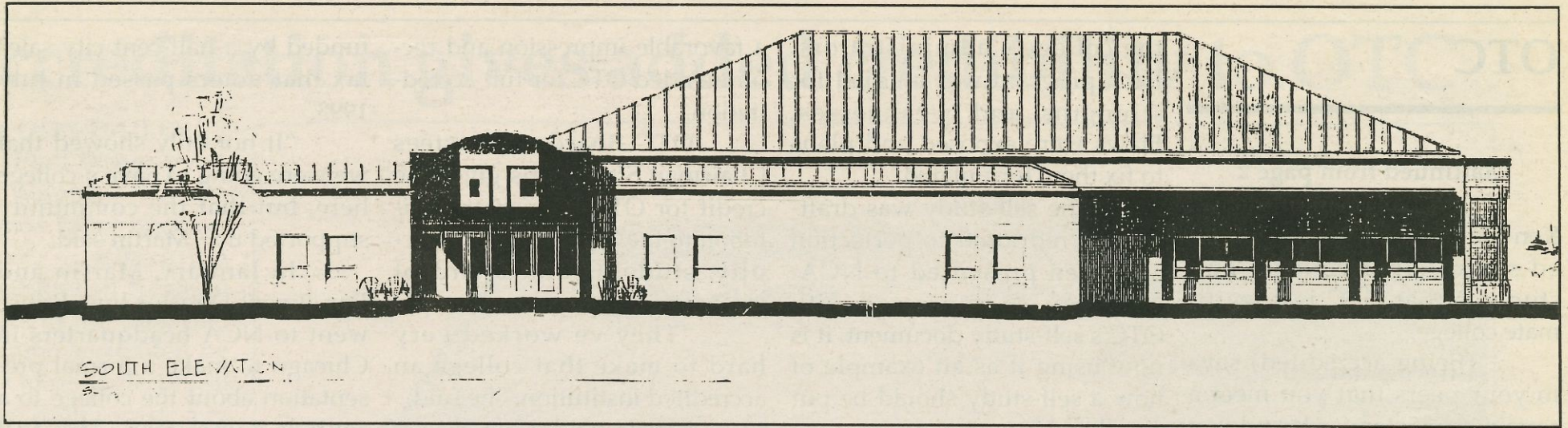


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A city sales tax was passed to pay for the Academic Learning Resource Center.

New learning center taking shape on campus

By DON DAILEY
Staff Writer

During the next couple of years a new building will be taking shape on the campus of Ouachita Technical College. It has come to be known as the Academic Learning Resource Center and it has everyone at OTC excited about the future.

Three years ago the stu-

dent body at the college began to grow and there was the matter of state required accreditation looming on the horizon. The college also needed facilities to teach the general education courses that would soon be transferable to other colleges in the state. In short, OTC needed to expand.

After the decision to

expand was made, OTC officials went in search of the \$1.5 million it would take to erect a new building. A deal was struck with the City of Malvern in which the city would collect a half-cent sales tax for 36 months and the money would be used to finance the building project.

The plan was taken to the

voters in Malvern and they approved the sales tax, a result that proved to the city and to OTC the college was supported by the people of Malvern.

"(The vote) not only showed that we were going to have a college here, but that the community supported us,"

Please see CENTER, page 5

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Center

Continued from page 4

OTC President Ken Martin said.

In an agreement worked up between the city and college, the City of Malvern will own the building and OTC will operate it.

The plans call for science labs, administration offices and a 150 seat terraced lecture hall to be located in the building, along with a library/learning resource center.

"The LRC will be the focal point of the new building," OTC President Ken Martin said.

The 24,000 square foot building will also contain a career counseling center, faculty offices and a bank of computers in the LRC.

Currently, the adult education program is located off-campus and science classes are being held at Malvern High School.

Martin said the new building will allow OTC to bring all of its classes in out of the cold and under one roof.

When the administration moves to the new building, adult education will take over the offices left behind. Science classes will no longer have to shuffle around because they are in borrowed labs.

Right now the only snag in the plan is the financing. In the 17 months since the half-cent sales tax went into effect the price of the building has gone from roughly \$1.5 million to around \$2 million, Martin said.

The problem is the sales tax money will only total \$1.5 million, so the college will have

to find the rest of the money somewhere else.

"We promised the electorate we would not ask for an extension on this tax," Martin said.

Another problem was a lawsuit that prevented OTC from starting construction for a year. During those twelve months, the price kept climbing higher.

Last summer, the Malvern City Council expressed reservations about spending the tax money before enough money is gathered to pay for the building in full. The city was worried about running out of money and having to pay to have the building finished.

A committee consisting of three city council members and three OTC trustees was formed to iron out the differences. It seems to have worked as there have been no major

riffs since then.

Meanwhile, the sales tax money is coming in and adding up at the clip of \$40,000 per month.

"Oddly enough, the money is coming in right at the rate we projected," Martin said.

Martin said the college is working on several plans to raise the rest of the money. He is confident that the money will come and the building will be built.

"We're going to have to put every dime that we have into the facility," Martin said.

Even with the financing challenge, Martin is confident that a ground-breaking for the new building will take place this summer.

"If we don't start it sooner or later, the price is going to go so high that we'll never get it built."

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Technical classes help OTC students find jobs



Daily Record photo- Burrow

By MELISSA BURROW
Staff Writer

Almost half of Ouachita Technical College's student semester credit hours occur in technical courses.

Ken Martin, president of OTC, said the school's enrollment has increased 300 percent since becoming a technical college in 1991. "Since we've made the conversion, we've been growing every semester," said Martin.

OTC has 10 Technical Certificate courses, and more than six Associates of Applied Science certificates. All of the courses fall under Business, Office and Information Systems; Applied Science and Technology; and Health and Human Services.

Yes, Martin said, Health and Human Services (nursing)

LET'S SEE... — Thomas "J.R." McJunkin, maintenance worker at Ouachita Technical College, works with a machine testing electrical circuits.

Please see **JOBS**, page 7

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Jobs

Continued from page 6

is a technical course.

"I view everything that is not general education or developmental or 'Fun Ed' as technical education," he said. "The human body is a technical function. The kinds of things we do in business is highly technical; it's technical to program a computer."

Martin said he believes graduates in a technical field will have no problem finding jobs.

Dean Carter, former diesel instructor at OTC, took Martin to visit with different trucking companies in Little Rock.

"Every place we went said, 'We will hire every graduate you can turn out,'" Martin said.

Although most positions are located in surrounding towns, and there's not a huge industrial base in Malvern, Martin said OTC graduates are employed at Precision Industries in Malvern.

Martin said larger companies are no longer seeking someone who specializes in one field, but rather are hiring more graduates who are a "jack of all trades."

OTC offers a multi-crafted degree, with courses covering welding, industrial electronics, heating/air conditioning, industrial equipment maintenance and other areas that in the past have been considered specialized courses.

"A person can go into a maintenance shop at any of the larger companies ... and know something about all of it," Martin said. "That seems to be what the larger companies are seeking."

The school is currently adding a Computer Information



Daily Record photo - Dailey

Cooking student David Bohnet serves up some rolls.

Systems Lab, which will be finished this fall.

"It's unique to Arkansas. There's not another program in Arkansas like this," Martin said. "This is someone that's an administrator that can take a computer apart, put it back together, fix what's wrong with it. ... It (Computer Integrated Manufacturing) turns itself into animated technology. That's the ultimate design of this program."

The Industrial Equipment Maintenance course is the most "hands-on," Martin said.

The cost of providing technical courses costs five to six times more than a general education course, Martin said, due to insurance, equipment and other mandatory costs. "That's just the nature of the beast."

This semester, students have taken 855 student semester credit hours in developmen-

tal courses, and 1,833 hours in general education courses.

On the technical side, students took 674 hours in applied science; 1,293 hours in business courses; and 500 hours in nursing.

The Technical Division Subcommittee is looking into putting more resources, primarily financial resources, into the technical portion of OTC, and to "breathe life into the programs in the future," said Steve Faris, chairman of the committee.

"It (TDS) was appointed this month with the idea of looking into the technical courses," said Faris.

Although enrollment has increased by 300 percent since OTC became a technical college in 1991, the numbers are falling in certain technical courses.

"Enrollments continue to decline at a time when there are more job openings than ever before," Martin said of the

diesel/automotive technical course. In the fall semester of 1994, 152 students enrolled in diesel/automotive courses. During fall 1995, the numbers dropped to 96 diesel/automotive students.

Faris said part of the reason for decline could be a lack of equipment.

"When you don't have enough tools to supply the class, it could cause someone to not take the course," Faris said.

In the past, Faris said, "Some of the programs may not have gotten the funding they should be given. Everything has been budgeted toward academic needs because of the need to be accredited. And now that we've been accredited, it's time to look into the technical courses."

Martin agreed the school needs new equipment, but, "The way our budget is up ... there's virtually no money right now."

Eighty percent of the college's budget covers salaries and fringe benefits; the rest is taken up by the general operations of the school.

If OTC is going to get new equipment, Martin said, the money will have to come through grants. Currently, the school receives \$45,000 each year from the Carl Perkins grant. That sounds like a lot of money, but, Martin said, a computer numerical control machine costs \$165,000. That's just one of the many purchases OTC needs to make.

"A loft for a diesel truck, you're talking about hundreds of thousands of dollars," Martin said.

Christi Etienne, chief development officer, joined the OTC staff this year to help search for alternative funding for the school. "That's the only way we're going to be able to put any money into capital, our technical programs," Martin said.

New foundation helps raise money, friends



Daily Record photo- Dailey

Group bridges college, community

By DON DAILEY
Staff Writer

Ouachita Technical College's Charter Foundation Board was created as a public relations and fund-raising entity, but OTC officials would like it to do more than raise money. They want the board to raise friends.

Christi Etienne, OTC's new director of development, believes that taking the time to explain what the school is all

CHIEF FUND-RAISER — Christi Etienne, Ouachita in charge of finding alternative funding sources for Technical College's new director of development, is the college.

Please see NEW, page 9

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New

Continued from page 8

about to people is more beneficial than just asking for money. That is what the foundation is all about: being ambassadors for OTC.

"They are good for public relations," Etienne said. "They let people know about the college and that we're good for the community."

OTC President Dr. Ken Martin said the foundation will allow the college to grow and expand during this time of shrinking financial help for education from the state and federal government.

"It's incumbent upon each (school) to go out and seek alternative funding sources,"

Martin said.

"The foundation is an alternative source of funding so that OTC can do the things the state and feds can't do," Martin added.

The 19 member foundation made up of Hot Spring County community and business leaders is just starting to get off the ground. It held its first quarterly meeting on Feb. 20. The foundation will be in charge of money raised for the college through donations and public and corporate grants.

That's where Etienne comes in. She is in charge of finding the grants and getting them to the college. She calls herself the "facilitator" for the foundation board. She makes sure the board members know what they need to know.

Etienne said she keeps in close contact with the faculty

and administration in order to keep abreast of what OTC needs and then she looks for a grant that will fit those needs.

The foundation votes on where unrestricted money goes at the college, be it scholarships, land acquisition, building costs, equipment costs, etc. Etienne is quick to point out that donors don't have to leave it up to the board, they can specify where they want their donations to go if they wish.

She said money from grants is restricted, but it still falls under the control of the foundations. Grant money awards are based on specific criteria and can be used only in areas indicated by the grant's regulations.

Etienne hopes the foundation can help the college become a focal point in the

community where everyone feels they can come to socialize, use the library, take a class or whatever. She wants the community to use what the college has to offer.

"It's a matter of getting the knowledge of the resources we have out to the public," Etienne said.

Etienne has set some ambitious goals for the foundation, including raising \$250,000 in unrestricted funds by January 1998, creating "a lot more" scholarships, helping with the building of the planned Academic Learning Resource Center and forming a program for businesses that will help them train employees.

"We want to be an indispensable resource for business and industry around the area," she said.

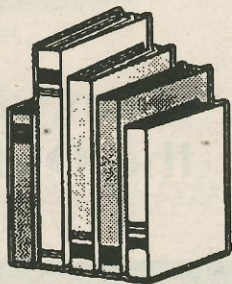
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New courses offer job opportunities to students

By **DON DAILEY**
Staff Writer

If you have ever contemplated a career in the medical, legal and computer fields, but didn't know where to go for the education, look no further. Ouachita Technical College has added new programs in those and other fields that can start you out in a career or boost your earning potential in your current job.

According to OTC Vice President Susan Azbell, it's becoming more difficult to get approval for new programs from the Arkansas Board of Higher Education. The board keeps an eye on the programs offered in the state's technical colleges in order to keep them up to certain standards, which ensures a quality education for every student.

"The Board of Higher Education's job is to make sure

the (job) market is not saturated (with graduates)," Azbell said.

Azbell said she is glad the board is exerting tight control over new programs and she is equally glad the board has allowed OTC to initiate several new programs in the last few years.

"We've started more new programs than any of the new technical colleges in Arkansas," Azbell said.

Two programs in the chute for the 1996 Fall semester are both in the legal field — legal secretarial and paralegal studies.

"The field of law is expanding as we become a more litigious society and lawyers are relying more and more on assistants who don't have law degrees," Azbell said.

The legal secretarial program is expected to draw 10-15 students who will earn one-

year technical certificates. Graduates will be able to function as a secretary in a law office. Students will learn to understand legal terminology, writing and structures.

The legal secretarial program is one of several offered in night classes and designed for people who work during the day and want to increase their education at night, Azbell said.

Students enrolled in the paralegal program will be involved with a two-year course of study that culminates in an associate's degree.

Paralegal graduates will be qualified to work with attorneys in research, writing and document preparation.

A full law library has been donated to OTC by the Hot Spring County Library with monthly updates and supplements on CD ROM software.

"This is a very lucrative

field with starting salaries around \$18,000," Azbell said.

In the computer field, OTC began two new programs in the Fall 1995 semester, computer repair and computer information systems: network management.

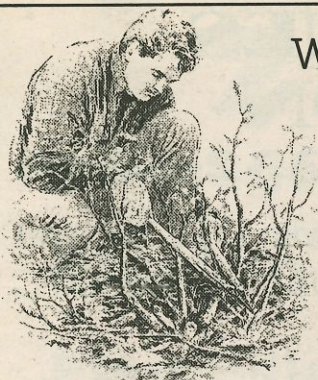
Computer repair is a one year technical certificate program that qualifies students to act as computer repair technicians to troubleshoot, service and maintain commercial computer systems.

Computer information systems: network management provides a very unique opportunity for area students.

"It's the first program of its kind in Arkansas and we are very proud of that," Azbell said.

Graduates from this two-year associate's program will

Please see **COURSES**, page 11



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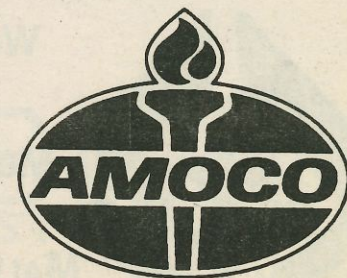
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Courses

Continued from page 10

know how to work with various network software such as Novell, Windows NT, network installation, Internet, e-mail and basic computer repair.

"This is an area that has absolutely exploded in terms of jobs and opportunities," Azbell said. She said graduates in this program can expect to see starting salaries in the \$40,000-\$50,000 range.

Azbell said the demand for people with network management training is so great that the administration is worried about students being offered jobs before they even graduate.

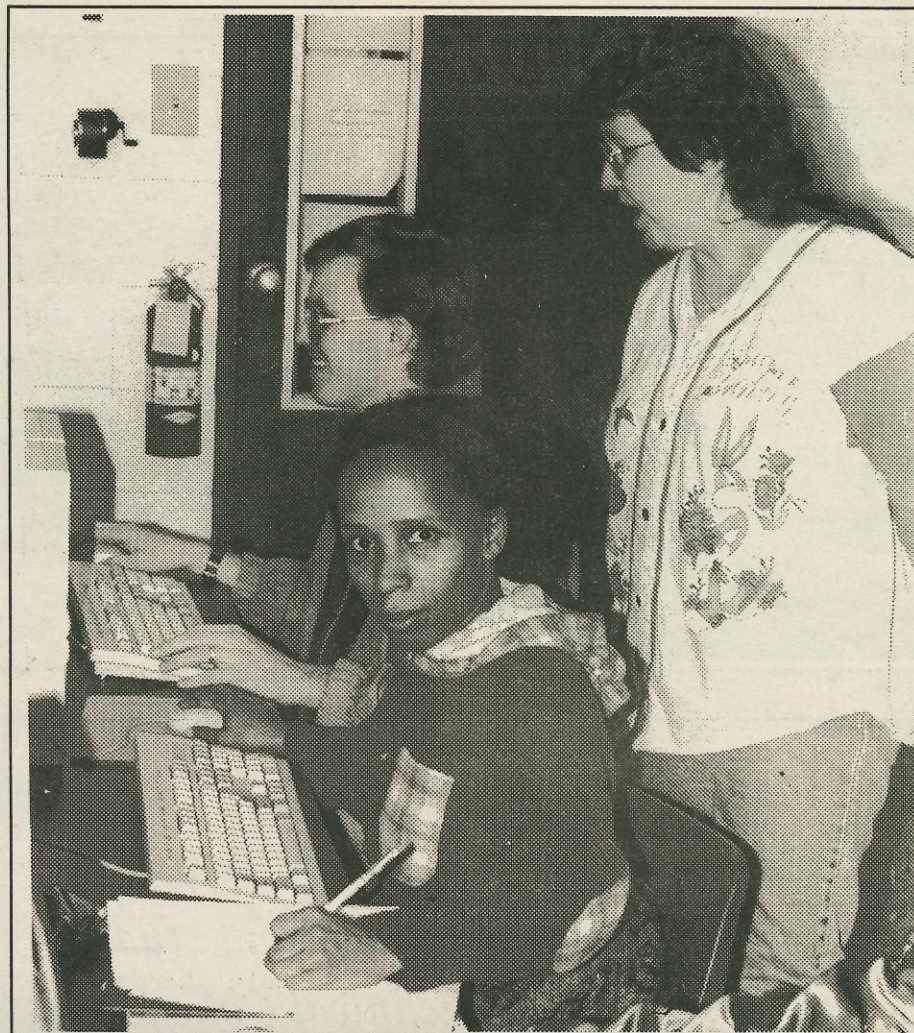
An associate's program in management and supervision began in the Fall of 1995. Twenty-two students are taking advantage of this program that

enables a graduate to enter the work force as an entry level manager or supervisor.

A one-year technical certificate in automotive service was introduced in the Fall of 1995 to provide for those students who don't want or need the full-associate's degree in automotive service. A graduate from this program will possess the skills to begin work as an entry level mechanic.

Azbell believes the new programs being offered by OTC helps the college fulfill its mission of meeting documented needs in the work force. She said they should draw more students and raise revenue a little bit, but those are not the big reasons the college has initiated the programs.

"The main reason and main benefit we see will not be from a revenue standpoint," Azbell said. "It will be from the standpoint of service to the community."



Daily Record photo- Dailey

Students learn about computers in the PLATO lab.

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Pete Paladino



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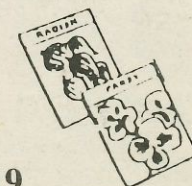
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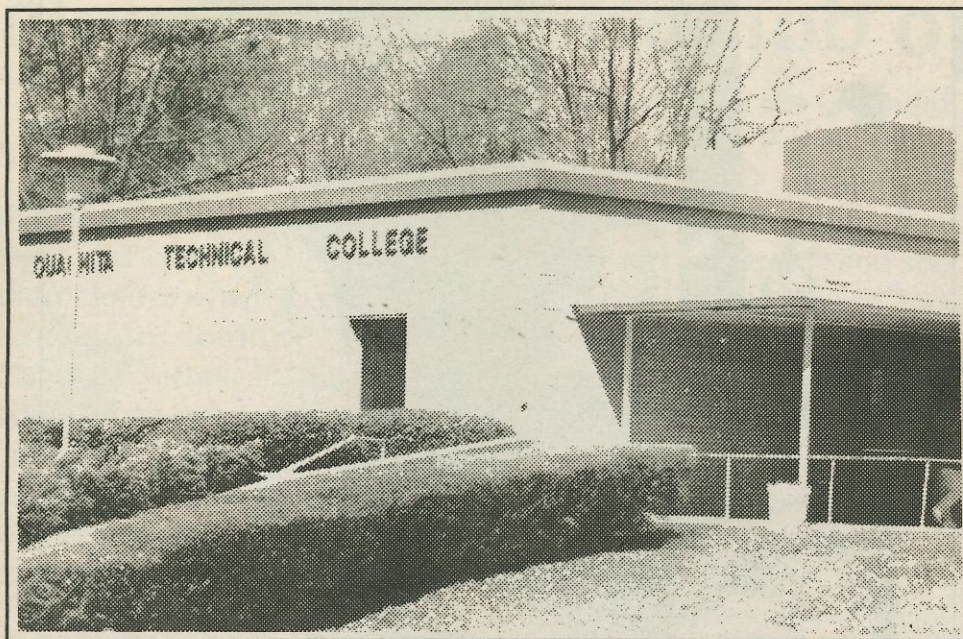
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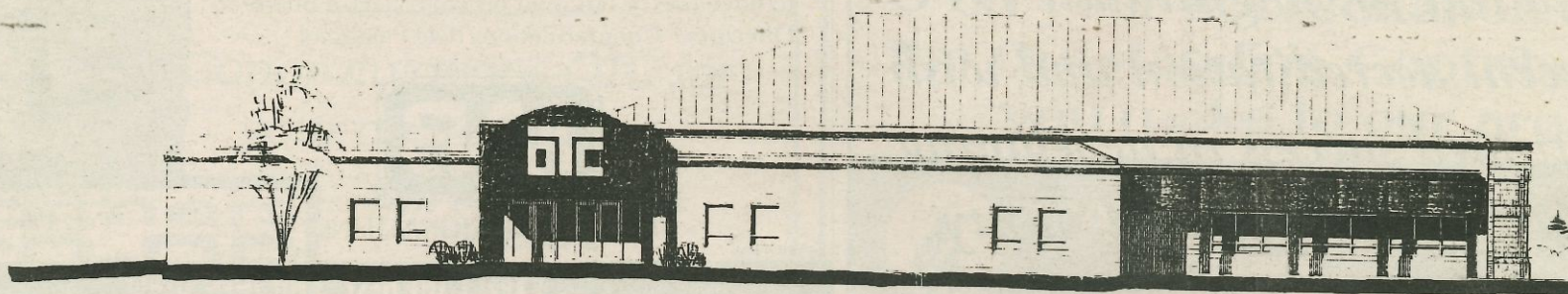


Daily Record photo- Burrow

The Malvern Daily Record salutes administrators, faculty, staff and students at the Ouachita Technical College.

WHISTLE WHILE YOU WORK — Thomas "J.R." McJunkin, maintenance worker at OTC, works painting the new CIS Lab expected to open this fall.

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