

# OZARKA COLLEGE

December 2024  
*Campus Connection*  
Holiday Edition  
*Inside the Issue*



## ACADEMIC ALL-STAR

Honoring the outstanding achievements and community outreach of Ozarka's finest students. p. 02.



## MVTC RIBBON CUTTING

Celebrating the grand opening with a ribbon cutting for Ozarka College's new facility. p. 04.



## FOUNDATION CORNER

Recapping events and volunteer opportunities for Ozarka campuses. p. 05.

## HOLIDAY EVENT

### *Santa visits Ozarka*

Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way to Ozarka College! On December 6, Ozarka played host to Santa Claus. The community was once again invited to celebrate the upcoming holiday and attend a completely free event made possible by the Ozarka College Foundation and White River Health. Several other individuals and organizations supported this year's event including First Community Bank, IZARD County Health Coalition, Northcentral Arkansas Education Service Co-op and FNBC Bank.

Each child in attendance had the opportunity to visit with Santa Claus and have their picture made with him. Activities included Christmas movies in the auditorium, holiday tattoos, letters to Santa, ornament decorating, Christmas stories, and snowman soup. Our wonderful Culinary Arts department provided snacks and drinks.

Thanks to all Ozarka College and community volunteers. This year's event put smiles on lots of faces. We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

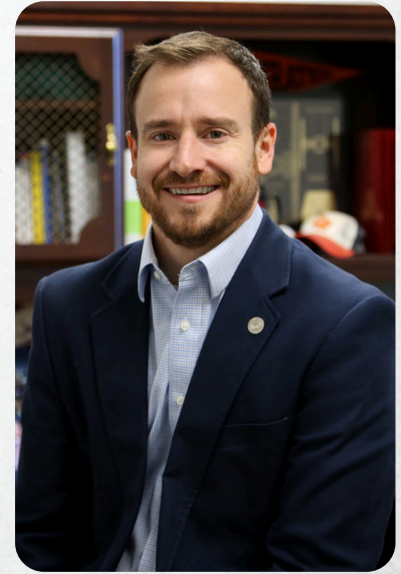


# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Dr. Josh Wilson*

Wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas and a joyful holiday season! As we look forward to spending time with family and friends, I want to take a moment to thank each of you for your unwavering dedication to advancing Ozarka and supporting our students' success. It's truly a privilege to serve alongside such a passionate and hardworking team.

When we return, I hope you feel refreshed, recharged, and ready to continue the amazing work we do together. You are some of the finest faculty and staff I've had the honor of working with, and I'm deeply grateful for all you do. Wishing you a safe, happy, and well-deserved Christmas break!



## ACADEMIC ALL-STAR

*ACC Conference*

Winners of the Academic All-Star Scholarships were announced in Hot Springs at the annual conference of Arkansas Community Colleges (ACC). The students were awarded a full-tuition transfer scholarship to any Arkansas public, four-year university to complete their bachelor's degree. The combined total for the scholarships is estimated to be more than \$500,000.

Lexi Cowan of Mountain View, Arkansas, was selected as Ozarka College's Academic All-Star and was presented with her transfer scholarship surrounded by family and friends. She is a dedicated student who plans to complete her Associate of Science degree in Accounting and then transfer where she hopes to pursue a Bachelor's degree. Lexi's passion for learning drives her career choice and can be seen in her community volunteerism and church involvement.

We are proud of Lexi's accomplishments, which include appearing on the President's list, serving as a student ambassador, and volunteering in her community with her youth group.

Congrats Lexi! We are very proud of all your hard work and wish you the best in your future endeavors.



# MOVIN & SHAKIN

## *Employee Transitions and New Hires*



### **Brittne Anderson – Practical Nursing instructor**

Brittne has joined the Ozarka family as a Practical Nursing Instructor! Brittne is a proud Ozarka alumna who understands firsthand the impact that a quality nursing education can have on a career. She is excited to return to her roots and inspire the next generation of nurses. Welcome back!

### **Kim Childress – Director of TRIO**

Join us in welcoming Kim Childress as the new Director of TRIO at Ozarka College! Kim brings a wealth of experience in student support services and is passionate about helping students achieve their academic goals.



### **Shawn Hall – Administrative Specialist III for TRIO**

Please join us in welcoming Shawn Hall to the Ozarka team as the new Administrative Specialist for TRIO! Shawn brings a wealth of experience in office management and she is excited to be a part of the TRIO program. With her organizational skills and dedication to student success, Shawn will be an invaluable asset.



### **Lynne Heithoff – Practical nursing instructor**

We are excited to welcome Lynne Heithoff as a new Practical Nursing Instructor at Ozarka College! Lynne brings a wealth of experience to the classroom, having worked in the nursing field for several years in various clinical settings, including hospitals and long-term care facilities.



### **Harrison Hicks – Institutional Services Assistant – Mountain View**

We're pleased to introduce Harrison Hicks as the new Institutional Services Assistant at Ozarka College's Mountain View campus! Harrison brings a wealth of experience in facilities maintenance and has a passion for making spaces safe, clean, and welcoming for everyone.



# CUTTING THE RIBBON

## *Mountain View Technical Center*

Big dreams became reality at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Mountain View Technical Center (MVTC)! On November 14, over 120 guests, including Ozarka faculty, staff, community supporters, and industry partners, gathered to celebrate this landmark moment for Stone County. Special guests from Entergy Arkansas, the Arkansas Office of Skills Development, and the Delta Regional Authority highlighted the event with their support and investments, which made the center's transformation possible.

The spotlight shone bright on Ozarka's commitment to workforce training, as Dr. Richard Dawe and Dr. Josh Wilson recognized the visionaries, donors, and key partners who helped launch the MVTC this semester. With generous contributions like Entergy's \$100,000, OSD's \$193,000, and DRA's \$437,000, the center is now equipped to train students in high-demand fields like welding, HVAC, and construction. This state-of-the-art facility is more than a building—it's a hub of opportunity for the region, advancing education, careers, and communities.



# THE SWEETEST SHOWDOWN

## *Culinary Cookie Contest*

For this semester's Midterm project, the culinary department hosted a one-of-a-kind cookie contest, where students were challenged to think outside the cookie box. Karen Alfaro, the winner from the morning class, gave a spin on the classic snickerdoodle, adding a twist of vinegar to the dough and stuffing it with a creamy cream cheese filling. Her cookies were a perfect balance of tangy and sweet, impressing everyone with her creativity and baking skills.

In the afternoon class, Ron McDaniel earned the top spot with a bold creation: a spiced cookie infused with German mustard. The mustard brought a unique zing to his spiced cookie, taking the traditional flavor profile to a new level. Both Karen and Ron demonstrated their talent and culinary innovation, proving that a little creativity can turn a simple condiment into a cookie masterpiece!



Ron McDaniel



Karen Alfaro

# FRIGHTFULLY FUN

## Staff Council Event

This fall, the Staff Council brought the Halloween spirit to life with a costume contest that exceeded all expectations! The event was a resounding success, uniting students, faculty, and staff in a celebration of creativity, community, and fun. Participation was fantastic, with costumes ranging from clever and humorous to downright spooky. What made the contest even more special was the unique voting process—winners were determined by the community, creating an inclusive and engaging experience for everyone involved.

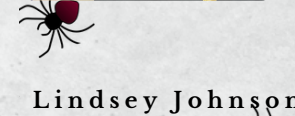
The winners truly stole the show: Mrs. Thielemier's RN class took first place with their hilarious and spot-on impersonation of Mrs. T, earning rave reviews for their attention to detail. Erin Lamb dazzled as the one and only DeEdra Steed from Ozarka College HR, perfectly capturing the iconic spirit of the role. Lindsey Johnson rounded out the winners with a chillingly lifelike zombie costume that left everyone in awe. A huge thank you to all who participated and contributed to making this event so memorable!



Mrs. T's RN Class



Erin Lamb



Lindsey Johnson

# TREE-MENDOUS GUESS

## Paul Weaver Library Contest

Get ready for some holiday fun at the Paul Weaver Library, where we're decking the halls with our annual "Book Christmas Tree"—this year expertly assembled by our very own Workstudy student, Trinity Wages!

We're inviting faculty, staff, and students to come by, take a look at the holiday tree made entirely of books, and guess how many titles are stacked up! Faculty, this is your chance to get your students involved in some seasonal fun—encourage them to stop by and take a guess! The more, the merrier!

And here's where it gets even more exciting: Three lucky winners will be chosen, with prizes awarded on Thursday, December 12. So, put on your thinking caps, swing by the library. It's a merry way to celebrate the season, and who knows—maybe you'll walk away with the perfect holiday prize!



# SGA ACTIVITIES

## *Student Government Association*

The Ozarka College Student Government Association (SGA) is preparing for an extraordinary Christmas dedicated to giving back to the community. SGA is partnering with Staff Council to collect canned food and nonperishable items, as well as toys for a toy drive. Items will be collected through December 11.

The goal is to gather over 425 pounds of food and numerous new toys during the campaign in hopes to beat last year's record. These items will then be delivered to local county DHS offices and food pantries to assist families ahead of the holidays. The Division of Children and Family Services will distribute the gifts to foster children in their county or to children from the Angel Tree program.

Thank you in advance for supporting these worthwhile SGA and Staff Council projects. Your contributions will make a meaningful difference in the lives of families this holiday season!



# ENERGY SPARKS OPPORTUNITY

## *Mountain View Commitment*

Big things are sparking in Mountain View! The Ozarka College Foundation just landed a \$100,000 commitment from Entergy Arkansas to supercharge its Technical Center expansion. This generous gift powers up the project with electrical upgrades, a new outdoor welding lab, and even crowns Entergy as the naming sponsor of the revamped Construction Lab.

"Entergy Arkansas is both honored and grateful for the opportunity to help provide additional educational opportunities for students in the Stone County area," said Danny Games, director of business and economic development for Entergy Arkansas. "Skilled trade workers continue to be in demand throughout our state and all over the nation, and we know this investment will result in adding qualified workers to our workforce which will help our customers."

Together, we're building a brighter, stronger future—one spark at a time!



# FOUNDATION CORNER

*We golfed, we gambled and tried to steal Christmas...*

The Ozarka College Foundation hosted several successful events this fall: Casino Night in Cherokee Village, annual Golf Scramble in Melbourne, Fall Concert in Mountain View and Santa made the trip to the Miller Building for the Holiday event. Community support for each event was overwhelming! The biggest thank you to all of our many wonderful volunteers this semester, you make these events what they are!

We look forward to an exciting spring event schedule to include the Ladies Luncheon in Mountain View and the annual Spring Gala on the Melbourne campus. For more information on how to get involved, contact the Advancement Department at [foundation@ozarka.edu](mailto:foundation@ozarka.edu) or 870.368.2059.



# FROM OUR KITCHEN TO YOURS

Staff and Faculty recipes

## CANDICE'S CROCKPOT MAC & CHEESE

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups uncooked elbow pasta
- 3 1/2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 can cheddar cheese soup
- 1 1/4 cup milk
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika

### MAKE

- COOK THE PASTA ACCORDING TO THE PACKAGE INSTRUCTIONS. ONE COOKED, DRAIN THE PASTA AND SET IT ASIDE.
- PREPARE THE CHEESE MIXTURE BY MELTING THE BUTTER OVER MEDIUM HEAT IN A LARGE SKILLET. ADD THE SHREDDED CHEESES, STIRRING UNTIL MELTED AND COMBINED INTO A SMOOTH MIXTURE.
- TRANSFER THE MELTED CHEESE MIXTURE TO THE POT OF THE SLOW COOKER. ADD THE CHEDDAR CHEESE SOUP AND SOUR CREAM, STIRRING UNTIL WELL COMBINED.
- ADD THE REMAINING INGREDIENTS TO THE SLOW COOKER AND STIR EVERYTHING TOGETHER UNTIL ALL THE INGREDIENTS ARE EVENLY DISTRIBUTED.
- COOK IN THE CROCKPOT ON LOW HEAT FOR 2 HOURS, STIRRING OCCASIONALLY.

From the Kitchen of  
Candice Shaver



## SEA SALT CARAMELS



From the Kitchen of  
Kendra Smith



### INGREDIENTS

- 14 ounce can sweetened condensed milk
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup butter
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 cup white karo syrup
- Cinnamon Caramels
- 1-2 teaspoon cinnamon oil
- 3/4 teaspoon red food coloring make sure it has no taste
- Black Licorice Caramels
- 3/4 teaspoon black food coloring
- 4 teaspoon anise extract
- Sea Salt Caramels
- Flaky sea salt

### MAKE

- Combine all ingredients in heavy pan.
- Cook on medium heat and stir constantly. (CONSTANTLY) until it reaches 244 degrees.
- Take off stove and if desired add the oil and food coloring.
- Licorice Caramels: Stir in 1 teaspoon anise oil or licorice oil and black food coloring.
- Cinnamon Caramels: Stir in cinnamon oil and red food coloring (but make sure it has no taste).
- Pour into a 9x13 pan lined with parchment paper. Cool completely before cutting.
- Sea Salt Caramels: Sprinkle flaky sea salt over the top.

## REINDEER RICE KRISPIES

From the Kitchen of  
Katie Norris

### INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups Rice Krispies cereal
- 2 tbsop butter
- 2 1/2 cups mini marshmallows
- Pretzels (for antlers)
- Chocolate chips (for eyes)
- Red candy (like M&Ms or Skittles) for noses



### MAKE

- IN A LARGE MICROWAVE-SAFE BOWL, MELT THE BUTTER AND MARSHMALLOWS TOGETHER IN 30-SECOND INTERVALS UNTIL SMOOTH.
- STIR IN THE RICE KRISPIES CEREAL UNTIL FULLY COATED.
- PRESS THE MIXTURE INTO A GREASED PAN AND LET IT COOL FOR A FEW MINUTES.
- CUT THE TREATS INTO RECTANGLES OR CIRCLES.
- ADD PRETZELS AS ANTLERS, CHOCOLATE CHIPS AS EYES, AND A RED CANDY NOSE TO MAKE ADORABLE REINDEER FACES. USE A LITTLE MELTED CHOCOLATE AS "GLUE" IF NEEDED.



If you would like to submit a recipe for the next newsletter please contact Katie Norris at [katie.norris@ozarka.edu](mailto:katie.norris@ozarka.edu)

## LIFE HACKS...

Holiday Theme

### HACK #1

Make your home smell like Christmas: Add a few cinnamon sticks, 4 orange halves, 1 cup of cranberries and 2 rosemary sprigs into a large pot. Cover with water and simmer all day

### HACK #2

Want to ice skate with slippery sidewalks? Stick fuzzy socks over your boots for extra traction. Bonus: they look adorable!

### HACK #3

Need a sled before the Arkansas snow melts. Grab a laundry basket or plastic bin lid and head out near the Ozarka housing to give your skills a try.



# STAFF COUNCIL CARES

## *Upcoming Events*

This fall, Staff Council has been busy creating opportunities for staff to connect, build community, and enjoy unique experiences while at work.

Recently, we put some of our raised funds to good use with a fun Halloween-themed activity. Staff were invited to guess the number of Candy Corn pieces in a festive jar, and Tania Wallace emerged victorious with the closest guess, taking home the jar of treats and a gift card.

We also hosted our second annual Fall Chili Cook-Off, which was a resounding success, bringing Ozarka together for a friendly and flavorful competition.

Looking ahead to spring, Staff Council is excited to announce plans for a second annual Silent Auction and a Professional Development event. If you're interested in helping with these upcoming activities, please reach out to Chrisha Savell, Valerie Long, or Cindy Williams. And congratulations to Cindy Williams on her appointment as Staff Council Secretary.



\*Photo Caption:  
Chrisha Savell



\*Photo Caption:  
Valerie Long



\*Photo Caption:  
Cindy Williams

# CAREER PATHWAYS INITIATIVE

## *Student Success Story*

Mercedes Staggs has soared to new heights, becoming CPI's first female aviation graduate to complete the program and earning both her private and commercial pilot licenses. A U.S. Army veteran and single mother, Mercedes faced unique challenges, including balancing the demanding requirements of night flight hours, parenting, and completely shifting her career goals. Despite these obstacles, she persevered, achieving a 3.3 GPA and proved that determination and support can turn dreams into reality.

Mercedes credits her success to her commitment to Ozarka and the crucial support she received. She recalls the financial strain of commuting between the college and airport but found relief in the assistance these programs provided. Motivated by her daughter and the incentives offered, Mercedes pushed herself to excel and complete her degree in aviation. Now a graduate, she's preparing for the next chapter in her career and expresses heartfelt gratitude for the resources and encouragement that helped her along the way.



# FALL FESTIVAL

## *Ash Flat Campus*

Ash Flat held its first annual Fall Festival this semester in late October. The beautiful weather helped bring in several students and their families. The Fall Festival was created to celebrate the season with students, faculty, staff and their families.

“The success of the fall festival was a testament to how hard working our faculty, staff, and students truly are,” said James Spurlock, Ash Flat campus director. “The event was enjoyed by those of all ages, and we are especially thankful for all our volunteers and community support.”

Many departments, programs, students, and community organizations were involved in the festival this year, and everything was provided free through the generous donations of all involved. Some of the activities and games included pick-up ducks, pumpkin bowling, glow ring toss, cake walk, bucket ball, free photos, and several other student led activities. There were also free hot dogs, drinks, popcorn and cotton candy. The event was loved by all who attended!



# 360 COLLABORATION

## *Marketing Center*

We recently teamed up with Melbourne High School's EAST program to enhance student learning opportunities with 360-degree tours of our facilities.

"We see this as a fantastic opportunity to connect with our local high school students and share the resources Ozarka College has to offer," said Dr. Josh Wilson, Ozarka College president. "The use of a 360-degree camera and their initiative to create immersive experiences aligns with Ozarka College's commitment to innovation and community involvement."

The EAST program at Melbourne High School offers its services to community groups, serving as a platform for students to gain real-world experience while contributing to their community. By partnering with Ozarka College, the students could create 360-degree tours of facilities such as specific programs, the student center, community rooms, technical labs, and more.



\*Photo Caption:  
East Students: Audrey Ogara, Baylee Brooks, Sophie Shrable, Haylie Logue

# FOND FAREWELL

*Dr. Richard Dawe*

Dr. Richard L. Dawe, Ozarka College's president since July 1, 2009, recently retired after a remarkable career marked by dedication and leadership. He oversaw many successes such as expanding programs, facilities, and advocating for student success. From his roots as Vice Chancellor at Ventura County Community College District in California to his tenure at Ozarka, Dr. Dawe has shaped the college's growth and its connection to the community. His previous roles, including Dean at College of the Ozarks and Assistant Professor at the Naval Postgraduate School, demonstrate his lifelong commitment to education. A retired naval aviator with a distinguished career as a captain, he also was integral in the success of Ozarka's aviation program.

Dr. Dawe's extensive academic background includes a Ph.D. in Public Policy and Administration from Saint Louis University, a Master's in Financial Management, and a Bachelor's in Industrial Technology. Beyond Ozarka, he's served on various boards, including the Arkansas Emergency Response Commission and the Arkansas Aviation Historical Society. Alongside his wife, Chris, Dr. Dawe enjoys life in Melbourne, where he plans to stay and enjoy retirement along with his love of flying.



# FOND FAREWELL

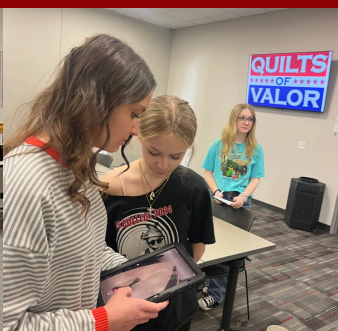
*Donna York*

Donna York, Administrative Specialist for Mountain View, retired this November after 16 years of dedicated service to Ozarka College. To celebrate her career, Donna was honored at a special retirement event, where colleagues gathered to share stories, express their gratitude, and wish her many joyful years ahead in retirement.

Donna joined Ozarka College in 2007 and quickly became an integral part of the Mountain View campus. Over the years, she worked tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure smooth operations and to support both students and staff alike. Her dedication and commitment have made a lasting impact on the college community.

From all of us at Ozarka, Donna, we thank you for your many years of service, and we wish you a happy, fulfilling retirement!





**Providing Life Changing Experiences through Education**



**Fall 2024**



