FIRST LADY JOANNE TOMBLIN VISITS NEW RIVER

First Lady Joanne Jaeger Tomblin visited New River on Friday, Jan. 14, for the signing of the National College Completion Challenge.

Tomblin joined President Ted D. Spring, and James Skidmore, chancellor of the West Virginia Community and Technical College System, for the ceremony held at the Education and Technical Training Center in Ghent. A number of civic, business and education leaders from around the region also were in attendance.

President Obama has challenged New River and other community colleges around the nation to double the number of students completing degrees or certificates within the next decade. This initiative has been embraced by the American Association of Community Colleges and five other groups representing the nation’s 1200 community colleges.

Tomblin, who is president of Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College, has taken a leadership role in bringing the Completion Challenge to the forefront in West Virginia.

All 10 community and technical colleges in West Virginia will sign the agreement over the next few weeks, committing them to implement policies, practices and an institutional culture that will result in awarding 16,000 new degrees by 2015.

“We at New River take enormous pride in the confidence that has been expressed in our work and our mission. But we also know we have a special challenge,” Spring said. “Nationally, community colleges already educate almost half of all undergraduates. And they educate higher proportions of minority, low-income and adult learners—groups experts say will make up the bulk of our future workforce. Hard economic times have brought thousands of new students to our campuses, but state funding for community and technical colleges continues to stagnate or decline. Despite the challenge of doing more with less, New River is accepting this challenge to meet the great need to help more students enter and complete college.”
New River has purchased the former Excel Homes Manufacturing facility and 23 acres of property in Ghent with a $3.3 million federal grant facilitated through the Office of the Governor. The remainder of the purchase price was paid from college funds, with the expectation that $600,000 will be returned to the budget through another federal grant secured with assistance from Congressman Nick Joe Rahall.

A start-up grant from the state made it possible for the college to lease the building in mid-2010 and begin retrofitting it to become New River’s Education and Technical Training Center (ETTC), a flexible training facility where a number of innovative workforce training programs are already being offered. The purchase was formalized at a signing ceremony during the visit by First Lady Joanne Tomblin on Jan. 14.

The building is already being used for weatherization training, and the new Line Service Mechanic Training Program started in the facility on Jan. 24.

FACULTY INSTITUTE KICKS OFF SPRING SEMESTER

Neither sleet nor snow nor bad roads could deter our intrepid faculty from attending Faculty Institute at Tamarack Jan. 12 and 13. Architect Todd Boggess (left) kicked off the program with an update of plans for the new Raleigh County Campus/headquarters building in Beaver and the renovation of the student activities building on the Greenbrier Valley Campus.

At right, Dr. John Mark Walkup, professor of music on the Nicholas County Campus, chats with Scott McClanahan, instructor of English on the Beckley Campus. In the background is fine arts instructor Nathan England from the Greenbrier Valley Campus.
**Steven R. Wise** has joined New River as dean of the Mercer County Campus. He began his duties on Jan. 12. Wise is completing a doctorate in educational policy studies and evaluation at the University of Kentucky. He has extensive experience in the areas of assessment, advising, institutional development, workforce education and recruitment and retention. Before entering the doctoral program, he was associate dean for residence life at Asbury University in Wilmore, KY. A graduate of Trevecca Nazarene University in Nashville, TN, Wise earned a master’s degree in college student personnel from Bowling Green State University in Ohio.

**Maxine D. Willis** has joined the Business Office as an accountant. She earned a bachelor’s degree in accounting from Mountain State University in 2006. She also has completed much of the course work towards a master’s degree in strategic leadership from Mountain State. Prior to joining New River, she was an accountant for the West Virginia Solid Waste Management Board in Charleston. She also has worked as a staff accountant and accounts payable manager at Mountain State University.

**Peggy Epling** is the new student program advisor for the Mercer County Campus. She comes to New River from Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College’s Wyoming County Campus, where she was a student services specialist. She has over 25 years of experience in higher education. She earned an associate’s degree in general business from Southern WVCTC, a regents bachelor of arts degree from Bluefield State and a master’s degree in counseling from the West Virginia Graduate College.
MEET A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Al Martine is Principal of Meadow Bridge High School. He received his bachelor’s degree in journalism from West Virginia University and master’s degrees in speech communications from WVU and education administration from the West Virginia Graduate College/Marshall University.

He has taught at both the high school and has been an adjunct instructor of speech communications at New River and Bluefield State.

Martine is married to Gina Pedri Martine of Mullens. His two sons are Albert, who lives in Dallas, TX, and Christian who attends Washington and Lee University in Virginia.

Martine is a member of the American Legion and a retired Major from the WV Army National Guard. He enjoys traveling and loves golf. He is active with the United Methodist Temple. Many individuals still remember him from his radio days when he owned WWNR Radio in Beckley.

He serves on a number of committees and boards including the Raleigh County Housing Authority, Beckley Appalachian Regional Hospital, WV Educational Association’s Higher Education Committee and their Political Action Committee.

“It is an honor and privilege to serve on the New River Board of Governors,” Martine says. “In a time of economic concerns, the board and administration have worked together to ensure the growth and financial stability of the fastest growing higher education institution in West Virginia.”

The Student Government Association on the Mercer County Campus sponsored a welcome back luncheon for students during the first week of classes. Preparing for the feast are (l-r) Peggy Epling, student program advisor; SGA President Kayleigh Oates and secretary Carol Harris.

Photo courtesy of Steve Wise

For the second year, The Greenbrier Valley Campus will be a site for the statewide College Goal Sunday event scheduled from 1-4 p.m. on Feb. 13. Donna Polk (L), student program advisor, and Nora Overath, financial aid counselor, are coordinating the many volunteers from New River who will provide free advice and assistance to people who are applying for financial aid.
NEW RIVER WILL PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

In March, New River will join other community colleges across the country in administering the community college survey of student engagement. The survey will be administered in classes randomly selected by CCSSE to ensure a representative sample and to preserve the integrity of the survey results. Instructors whose classes are selected for survey administration will receive specific information from the appropriate administrator on each campus. The survey can assist us in identifying where we are and what further action may be helpful in our continuing work to support and strengthen teaching and learning. Your cooperation and participation in this national survey are sure to enhance our educational programs and services to students.

You can learn more about CCSSE from the project website at www.ccse.org. If you have any questions about the project, please contact Renae McGinnis, rmcginnis@newriver.edu.

NEW RIVER, GREENBRIER COUNTY COMMISSION SIGN LEASE FOR POOL

New River has signed a lease with the Greenbrier County Commission giving the county the use of the pool in the former student activities building on the Greenbrier Valley Campus. The lease was signed by President Spring, Board of Governors Chair Leslie Baker and County Commission President Betty Crookshanks in a ceremony on Jan. 21. Also in attendance were New River officials and board members, Lewisburg Mayor John Manchester, and a number of community members who have been advocating for a public pool in the building.

“This lease agreement has been under discussion for several years and the college is pleased that we have reached a workable agreement to provide the pool area to the community,” Spring said. “Our Board of Governors initially agreed to the arrangement, however, the details of the renovation of the building, which in addition to the pool will include classrooms, allied health labs, fine arts classrooms and laboratories, a café and student work space, took a great deal of time.” Spring believes that completion of the building will provide a quality instructional space convenient to students and a wonderful, state-of-the-art aquatic resource for the community.

The lease gives the county access to the pool and ancillary areas for a fee of $1 per year. The lease specifies that the responsibility for renovation, maintenance, upkeep and management of a portion of the building where the pool is located will be the responsibility of the County Commission. The County also will be responsible for paying utilities for the pool.