

# LOCAL NEWS



Trinidad School District One Board of Education members honored the Trinidad Las Animas County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (TLACHC) board and Education Committee members with a certificate of Appreciation in recognition of the many years of support and service to Trinidad and School District One. The TLACHC has been awarding educational scholarships to local students since 1988. In Place, is the Southern Colorado Coal Miners Memorial Scholarship, the Regional Scholarships with TSJC, and an Independent Scholarship. Students are always encouraged to apply for each scholarship to further their education.

(Photo courtesy of the Hispanic Chamber)



Locals were invited to celebrate Mardi Gras at Trinidad Brewing Company on Tuesday with a menu of Fat Tuesday inspired food and drinks. Local band, The Sunnyside Ups, helped reverberate the festive feeling encouraging attendees to dance and party into the night.

(Photo by Regina Hamlin)



Trinidad Brewing Company's Mardi Gras party was in full swing to celebrate Fat Tuesday. Attendees are seen here dancing to music by The Sunnyside Ups, with Bob and Arela Webster (far right) displaying Mardi Gras themed attire and masks, made by Arela.

## Watch out for fraudulent Federal tax rebate offers

Special to the Chronicle

The United States Small Business Administration (SBA) has alerted the Better Business Bureau about a scam that could potentially affect small businesses. Letters, on what appears to be SBA letterhead, are being sent to companies requesting that they provide the SBA with the name of their bank account and account number in order to qualify for federal tax rebates.

The fraudulent letters, sent

to small businesses all across the country, advise recipients that they may be eligible for a tax rebate under the Economic Stimulus Act. The letters claim the SBA is assessing the businesses' eligibility for such a rebate.

These letters have not been sent by or authorized by the SBA. Both the SBA and your BBB strongly urge that no one respond.

This scheme is similar to e-mail scams often referred to as

"phishing" that seek to gather personal data and financial account information, thus enabling another party to access an individual's bank account, or steal one's identity.

The SBA is working with the SBA Office of Inspector General (OIG) to investigate the scam. The Office of Inspector General asks that anyone who receives such a letter report it to the OIG Fraud Line at 1 (800) 767-0385, or e-mail at OIGHotline@sba.gov.

## Trinidad State Junior College nursing program flourishes

Courtesy of Trinidad State Junior College

Special to the Chronicle

The Trinidad State Junior College Nursing Program is flourishing due to the continued support of individuals

and businesses in the community and the efforts and professionalism brought to the program by Nursing Program faculty and staff under the leadership of TSJC Nursing Programs Director Kathy Howell, RN, MSN.

While the TSJC Nursing Program has a long tradition, with the first class of nurses graduating over fifty years ago, time had taken a toll on the classrooms and equipment. In 2006, TSJC President RuthAnn Woods, Vice-President Sandy Veltri, Kathy Howell and grant-writer Miriam Zappanti (now retired), put their heads together to see what could be done.

Through an appeal to the community \$50,000.00 was raised from individual and business supporters, and this shared support from the community contributed to the college receiving a \$60,000.00 grant from the Caring for Colorado Foundation.

The funds donated by the community were used to update the nursing classrooms and purchase new equipment for the Nursing Program. The funds from the grant were used to purchase two simulation mannequins (SimMan TM) and to pay for training nursing faculty to use the mannequins in a simulated setting. (One SimMan was purchased for each of the Trinidad and Alamosa campuses with this grant). This was celebrated with a Nursing Donors Open House and Ribbon-cutting in October 2006.

Since then, TSJC's Nursing Program has continued to grow and progress each year. It continues to receive the support of community members. Most recently, on February 9th, the college celebrated another ribbon-cutting for the 'Dr. Marci Bowers Nursing Lab.' Bowers donated funds to purchase equipment for a 'Smart Classroom.' This equipment includes a 'Smart

Lectern' that contains a computer and an audio/video system that allows the instructors to playback DVDs and VHS videos, plays audio content from the computer through permanently mounted speakers in the room, and displays the video via a large screen projector.

In expressing her appreciation on behalf of the college, President Woods stated, "We thank Dr. Bowers for her commitment and dedication to the Nursing Program at TSJC. Because of her contribution, our students will have the benefit of an enhanced learning environment to better prepare them in the skills necessary for their future." Howell said that the instructors have begun using the new equipment and the students are "thrilled."

"The college has also received a \$2,000.00 grant from the Colorado Rural Health Center, which helped us to purchase some computer simulation programs," said Howell. In addition to SimMan TM, the college also uses other state-of-the-art simulators, Birthing Noelle TM, and SAM TM. These patient simulators teach clinical symptoms and treatment modalities to nursing students. They can authentically imitate a variety of medical conditions, and human vital signs and bodily functions. With the instructor sitting at the computerized controls, the patient simulator can respond to the treatment administered by the nursing student. "This state-of-the-art equipment and technology allows students to simulate certain conditions and gain experience," said Howell. "It enables us to enhance the students' critical thinking skills," said Howell.

The Trinidad State Junior College Nursing Program has hired a Simulation Coordinator and is in the forefront with its progressive use of simulation technology. Howell recently announced



Dr. Marci Bowers, TSJC Nursing Program students, and members of the community celebrate Open House and Ribbon-cutting for the Dr. Marci Bowers Nursing Lab. (Photos courtesy of TSJC)

that at the January 21st, 2009 Full Board Meeting of the Colorado State Board of Nursing, the Board voted unanimously to accept TSJC's proposal to accept simulation activity equivalent to 15% of required clinical hours. This is the first two-year college nursing program in Colorado to gain such approval.

TSJC Associate Degree nursing students gain the other 85% of their required clinical hours at Mt. San Rafael Hospital, Colfax Miners Memorial Hospital, the Las Animas County Health Department, Trinidad Nursing Home, as well as with local physicians and home health agencies.

In 2010, Colorado will be estimated to have 17% fewer nurses than needed (Colorado Center for Nursing Excellence, 2007), and because the demand for nurses continues to increase, the wages for nurses increase correspondingly. The median base income for registered nurses in Colorado is estimated to be



TSJC nursing students with Birthing Noelle TM, an interactive female and neonate birthing simulator.

\$63,500.00 per year (Salary.com 2008).

It is estimated that nationwide, sixty percent of registered nurses are educated in community colleges. (American Association of Community Colleges). By continuing to increase the quality of its nursing program, pro-

viding the best education and training, utilizing cutting edge technology and expanding its capacity through the use of simulators, Trinidad State Junior College will continue to do its part to deliver its share of well-trained nurse for another fifty successful years.

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(719) 846-3311 • FAX: (719) 846-3612  
Members Associated Press - Colorado Press Association.  
Periodicals Postage Paid For At Trinidad, CO. Published Daily Except Saturday and Sunday ©2006 The Shearman Corp.  
www.trinidadchroniclenews.com

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