

## Fire Safety Day educates students on campus

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**SPECIAL TO THE HERALD**

Arkansas State University hosted Fire Safety Day to help students prepare for the unexpected as part of National Preparedness Month.

Fire safety day brought the Jonesboro Fire Department to the Heritage Plaza Lawn.

Wyatt Reed, emergency operations and occupational safety specialist, said the goal of fire safety day is for students to learn how to keep their residences safe and to stop and think about the importance of being prepared.

“With preparedness we each individually play such an important role in making sure we’re ready to prevent and respond to something in our own individual lives,” Reed said. “We get very complacent with things so we don’t think about all the different hazards that we face on a daily basis, especially when it comes to something like fire.”

Jason Willis, the Jonesboro Fire Department division chief and fire marshal, said the most important thing

for people to remember during a fire is to stay calm.

“If the fire has grown, get out of that situation. Call 911 as quickly as possible. Have an escape plan,” Willis said.

Willis reminded students to check their smoke alarms, have a fire safety plan and talk about fire safety with those they live with to hopefully save lives.

The fire department drew students to the event by having a firetruck in the lawn and a Bullex machine creating a digital version of a fire that students could use to practice extinguishing a flame with a fire extinguisher.

Willis said it is important for students to know how to use a fire extinguisher.

“It’s the first line of defense. The fire extinguisher is a tool for the general public to be able to stop a fire in the incipient phase,” Willis said, “So we want to stop fires while they’re nice and small and they don’t get out of hand,”

Jacob Copeland, a senior computer science major from St. Louis, tried out the fire extinguisher and said it is much



PHOTO COURTESY OF JONESBORO FIRE DEPARTMENT

John Yates, Jonesboro Fire Department battalion chief, educating students on fire safety.

harder to use a fire extinguisher than he originally believed. “Basically, I did not know side to side. Like, from everything I

saw, I thought you just pointed at it and sprayed it. You actually have to go side to side to douse the fire,” Copeland said.

Copeland said he feels much more prepared than before should there be a fire nearby. The next event scheduled

for National Preparedness Month is a CPR Awareness Course Sept. 26.

### ABI, CONTINUED

Prattada said they discovered almost 1,200 people – students, faculty and staff – have either visited or been a part of ABI in the last two decades. She said she was excited to reach out to nearly 500 people, encouraging them to return to campus and see the progress.

Pattada wanted people to come and see what the institute is doing and what they have been able to accomplish for the past 20 years.

“We are still here to serve A-State and the faculty, staff and students have been looking forward to give that service

to A-State,” Pattada said.

#### ABI history and accomplishments

When the statewide Arkansas Bioscience Consortium celebrated its 20th year anniversary in 2001, the voters of Arkansas passed a referendum to allocate tobacco settlement dollars to health care and research in the state, leading to ABI’s conception.

Marsico said 2024 represents the opening of the ABI facility and the collaborative research produced there.

“So that’s why we were celebrating 20 years of existence here on campus at A-State with this building in place,” Marsico said.

The core mission of ABI’s has not changed but has been refined to focus on identifying interdisciplinary research opportunities.

Marsico said the faculty and staff developed a strategic plan to assess ABI’s strengths for future goals, identifying their vision to serve the people of Arkansas as the leading student-centered interdisciplinary research institute.

“Our mission statement is educating, discovering and innovating through interdisciplinary research that improves agriculture, health and well-being in Arkansas,” Marsico said. “We use our core values to always be

pushing toward that mission, but that fits well under the statewide consortium mission.”

Groundbreaking research projects, scientific innovations and developments at A-State’s ABI such as: the National Science Foundation’s plant powered production initiative, collaboration with the University of Nebraska and Kansas State University to develop climate resilient crops through vitamin C pathways, cancer biology and sending worms to space to degrade plastic.

Since Jan. 1, ABI has submitted grant proposals to external sources totaling \$17.7 million for funding of upcoming scientific research projects,

which are currently under review.

#### How to get involved

The outreach program at A-State champions the ABI regarding student involvement.

R. Shea Harris, outreach coordinator at ABI, said through Cramer’s determination to build a figurative pipeline from K-12 to A-State.

“I have been in charge of that program for about 10 years and we’ve hosted probably close to 5,000 K-12 students that have went on to Arkansas State and are now in professional or schools, or are working as doctors, nurses, scientists in different parts of the nations,” Harris said.

Harris said seeing K-12

students and witnessing the start of their fascination with scientific exploration and experimentation was important to him in wanting to encourage the expansion of the ABI and said accessibility is the key to do so.

He said getting involved as soon as possible can provide valuable opportunities, such as volunteering in a research lab or securing internships.

“A-State’s large enough where we have cutting edge research going on, but also small enough where you can actually get involved in that research as a freshman,” Harris said. “You don’t have to wait until you’re a graduate student.”

### BLOOD DRIVE, CONTINUED

Sharing blood does not just help those in need of blood, but it also helps prevent blood-related diseases, such as sickle-cell disease.

According to the Red Cross, sickle cell is “an inherited blood disorder that causes red blood cells to become hard and sickle-shaped, which can

block blood flow and cause serious health complications.”

Colby Brockmeyer, a bio technician for American Red Cross, said African Americans need to donate to prevent the large number of sickle cells within the African American Community.

“African American donors, we need your guys’ blood so bad,” Brockmeyer said.

Brockmeyer said the

main deterrent from African Americans not giving blood is due to them not knowing the size or severity of the needle and the impact that they could have on their community.

“It’s very important, sickle cells are huge in the black community, and we need that blood. And maybe 3% are African American donors,” Brockmeyer said.

Brockmeyer said not having

a relationship with the African American community has been the biggest fall of blood drives.

“It is huge, especially a hard relationship with the African American community. If we could get our relationship with them back to working condition, it would be life changing,” Brockmeyer said.

According to the American Hospital Association, 3% of the eligible U.S. population

donates blood each year. About 90 hospital-based blood centers and 53 community blood centers are registered with the Food and Drug Administration.

“A lot of people don’t even think about it anymore, especially the younger crowd. All we get is old people,” Brockmeyer said.

She said it is important for college students to give as much as they can while they are still young and fully healthy.

“For some, it’ll be that they never come back. Others, they are actually going to know the significance of what they just did and they’re going to come back each month here, like in the college setting, it gives an opportunity for more people to know about it,” Brockmeyer said.

To donate blood you have to be at least 17-year-old and 110 pounds.

### WINDGATE, CONTINUED

Lake Summers, a junior studio art major from Cherokee Village, Arkansas, said they are looking forward to the new building because it will provide a bigger space with the proper utilities to safely experiment with new mediums.

“We can’t use oil paints right now because there’s no ventilation in here, so it’s a safety hazard,” Summers said. “With the new building we are going to have the option of learning (the medium).”

The addition of the

three-floor building to the A-State campus has been made possible through the Windgate Foundation’s gift of \$25 million to the university.

Kipp Ellis, principal and science and technology leader at education and design firm Good Clancy said the building will be beautiful and well-connected to the history of the A-State campus. He said this will allow students and faculty to complete and present their artwork in ways that are not currently possible.

“The building itself will be open and airy,” Ellis said. “It will extend invitations to connect the outside to the inside, and it will

be more open and transparent, yet unpretentious and have an industrial ethos that allows all students and faculty that use the building to feel like they are very much works in progress.”

Abby Armstrong, a senior art history and museums studies major from Bay, Arkansas, said she is excited to see the program growing and gaining facilities.

“I’ve never been a part of anything like this before,” Armstrong said. “To see my senior year that it is expanding as much as it is, and new students that I’m meeting now are getting to experience all of this once it comes to fruition, is really cool.”

### BSA, CONTINUED

“Especially with us being a minority here, it’s just important that we stay true to ourselves and the sky is the limit,” Glass said. “I wasn’t really very confident in myself to do this and I stepped out of my comfort zone and that just proved to me that anything is possible.”

Additionally, Glass said he is running for A-State’s Homecoming King.

Evans, a senior nursing major from Little Rock and winner of Miss BSA, said her mission statement is to celebrate Black

culture and accomplishments. Highlighting the value of education, self-assurance and social consciousness in society and the A-State community.

“The community we have in BSA, while being in a predominately white institution, is kind of intimidating sometimes, but I feel like we have the opportunity to do what we can to cultivate and bring people on campus together,” Evans said.

Evans said she always wanted to represent what BSA has done for her, noting that the organization encouraged her to step out of her shell. This motivation led her to run for Miss BSA.

“I’m excited; I didn’t expect to win,” Evans said. “I’m glad I was able to meet the expectations and be someone who can represent BSA for a full year, I’m really grateful.”

Following the crowning ceremony, BSA held an informational session for its upcoming event, “Miss Essence,” a pageant that will allow contestants to showcase their talents for a chance to win a scholarship.

“BSA has some big things planned this year and I am super excited,” Pope said. “I hope everyone comes out to support!”