



PHOTO, 4B
Black History Month at A-State

Black Business Expo uplifts local businesses

“It’s a really awesome opportunity to see businesses that you wouldn’t normally see.”

SHAILEY WOOLDRIDGE

NEWS EDITOR

The Black Student Association (BSA), KLEK radio station and the Kappa Nu Omega chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority hosted the annual Black Business Expo and highlighted Black-owned businesses in the area.

This event was free for all vendors, with proceeds going directly back to them.

Ian Buchanan, BSA advisor, said this event is more appropriate this year than ever because the overall theme for Black History Month in 2025 is “African Americans in Labor.”

“This is a perfect example of how to support and show successful, thriving black owned businesses,” Buchanan said. “Small businesses, especially in today’s climate and economic climate, need your support. So we wanted to make sure that we highlighted those businesses, that we bring awareness to those businesses, and also that we support them financially through allowing them to come.”

Buchanan said this event was student led with BSA’s executive board doing all of the planning, coordination and outreach to businesses.

“I think it’s important for students to see successful



Photo by Ibuki Hinohara | Photo Editor
(Left) Sonia Hunter sells sweets to students. Hunter operated the “Sonny’s Sweets & Treats” table at the Black Business Expo.

businesses, to foster the spirit of entrepreneurship, and to show them that no matter what it is, if they have an idea, it can make money if they pursue it,” Buchanan said.

Kearstin Vaughn, vice president of BSA and director of special events, said it’s important to create spaces for Black students to feel comfortable and supported, as opportunities tailored to their needs are often lacking.

“I feel like, with the Black Student Association, we have to create spaces for us that make us feel unapologetically ourselves, so inviting businesses that support that agenda, we’re able to buy what is catered towards us,” the senior interdisciplinary studies student from Little Rock said.

Janarie Prince, a sophomore psychology major from New Orleans, serves as the BSA treasurer.

She said the expo is a great way for students who aren’t from Jonesboro to make connections and it is important to showcase the businesses in Jonesboro that are black-owned. “It just showcases to them (students) how much Black people have advanced in the community,” Prince said. “Especially in Jonesboro, being a predominantly white city or town, as you like to call it, it just shows them how many



Photo by Ibuki Hinohara | Photo Editor
(Left) Denver Brooks, a sophomore radiology major from North Little Rock, buys bath bombs from Tia Buchanan.

prominent places that we have that are Black-owned.” LaQuita Lewis, owner of Greek Vine Custom Apparel and embroidery, had a booth at the event. Greek Vine is located at 2005 E Highland Drive in Jonesboro and sells Greek apparel as well as custom embroidery. Lewis said she purchased the business in 2020 so she could do more for the Divine Nine

Greek organizations that were underrepresented in this area. She said she has participated in this expo every year that she’s owned the business because it’s important for students to see that they can be a business owner with a degree.

CONTINUED:
EXPO, 4A

Black Student Association kicks off 2025 BSA Week with line dancing

LAILA CASIANO

OPINION EDITOR

The Black Student Association’s kickoff events for “BSA’s Soul Train” began with their first on-campus event, “Movin’ and Groovin’ Line Dancing Class,” to teach students choreography for line dancing.

This year’s BSA Week highlights the importance of culture, community and celebration for Black History Month. The line dancing took place at the Reng Student Union in Centennial Hall on Feb. 10, with an estimated attendance of 30 people.

“Black History Month is a space for other communities and cultures to understand where we came from. It’s also a time for us as Black people to reflect on our past, where we are now, and what we can do to improve and change what’s happening in the world.” BSA President Cabrina Pope said. “That feels more important now than ever.”

Pope, a sophomore marketing major from Little Rock, said the line dancing event came about because it was a highly suggested idea for the BSA to incorporate into its BSA Week activities.

“A lot of our students, whether at functions on campus or off-campus, always do line dances,” Pope said. “Some of the newer members don’t know

them and some of the faculty and staff don’t either. So, I just think it’s a good way for them to learn, have a good time, and everybody likes dancing, so it’s fun.”

She said she hoped attendees not only walked away with knowledge of line dancing and choreography but also gained a better understanding of their culture and presence at A-State.

Karrissa Ragland, a first-year psychology major from Nashville, Arkansas, attended the event and said line dancing has always been a part of her life, through weddings, birthday parties, barbecues or any type of get-together.

“It’s always been a source of something good to bring us together,” Ragland said. “It’s a sense of unity.”

She also said when learning line dancing, it’s important to remember that learning choreography comes with time.

“The more you do it, the more your body will learn the motions, so you just have to keep going at it and eventually you’ll have the muscle memory to remember,” Ragland said.

The event taught attendees the Shuffle Line dance, the Slow Wind, K-Wang, the Biker Shuffle, the Bunny Hop and the Tamia Line dance.

Kearstin Vaughn, a senior interdisciplinary studies major



Photo by Ibuki Hinohara | Photo Editor
Students learn how to line dance during the “Movin’ and Groovin’ Line Dancing Class” event, hosted by the Black Student Association.

with a medical emphasis from Little Rock, is the BSA’s vice president and director of special events. She was charge of creating and coordinating all BSA events.

She, with the help of Jordan Ashford, BSA community service chair, taught attendees line dancing.

“Line dancing is sort of essential when attending an event that we throw and a lot of people tend to disconnect in that area of events due to them not knowing how to do the dances,” Vaughn said. “So, this will create an

opportunity for them to learn.” She said line dancing can create an opportunity for connection, specifically within Black culture.

“Line dancing as a part of our week for Black History Month holds a special place for dancing and congregating with one another at several functions,” Vaughn said. “We find community and knowing others can participate in the things that we enjoy.”

Pope shared similar sentiments. “From a young age, at every family event, you learn how

to do line dances. It’s a way to express ourselves and it brings our families and communities together,” Pope said. “Even if you don’t know the people around you, once a line dance comes on, everybody gets up and joins in.”

Pope said with BSA’s recent growth, the organization will be able to put on larger events and gain more funding to continue hosting major events on campus.

The 2025 BSA week will end Thursday with its final event, “Get Down on a Night of Rhythm and Talent,” at the Reng Student Union auditorium at 6:30 p.m.

THIS WEEK IN THE HERALD:

OPINION, 2A

- Spotify: the people’s music streaming service
- YouTube Music: the underdog of music streaming services

NEWS, 3A

- Lecture-concert series presenter gives speech on ethics of AI automation
- BAM hosts anthology workshop for Darwin Day
- Neuroscience Club takes a deep dive into the brain in special lab
- Campus Crime

SPORTS, 1B

- The Red Balloon: A decades-old tradition

ARTS & E, 2B

- Devised theatre unleashes new play
- “The Breakfast Club” turns 40
- “SOS: LANA” deluxe album new track rankings

LIFE, 3B

- Club spotlight: Pre-law club
- This week’s horoscopes