It was 108 years ago on Feb. 20, 1908 when a special train rolled up the railroad tracks from downtown Tifton for opening day ceremonies at the Second District Agricultural and Mechanical School. Today that school is known as Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.

“It’s always a great day to celebrate another birthday,” ABAC President David Bridges said. “ABAC today is much different than it was in 1908 but let’s give credit to all the faculty, staff, administrators and students who set the foundation for the success story that ABAC is today.”

City officials declared a holiday when the school opened in 1908. As a result, downtown stores and the public school were closed on that special day. Some 1,200 people attended the opening day ceremony. A total of 27 students walked up the Tift Hall steps to attend classes. Lewis Hall and Herring Hall, adjacent to Tift Hall, served as the dormitories for boarding students.

Residents of Tifton started getting excited about the new area high school on Nov. 23, 1906 when Tifton won the bidding process for the site of the school over Albany, Pelham, Camilla, and Ashburn. Captain Henry Harding Tift, founder of Tifton, led the delegation and personally financed a portion of the bid, which was successful on the eighth balloting. The Tifton Gazette proclaimed “The Hallelujah Day Has Come, Tifton Lands the A&M School.”

“It has been another great year for ABAC with more bachelor’s degree graduates than ever before,” Bridges said. “We still maintain those core values from 1908 and the promise of a quality education for every student who walks in a classroom on our campus. We prepare these students for life.

Continues on page 2

ABAC Celebrated 108th Birthday on February 20

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

ABAC, Tift Regional Partner to Improve Healthcare and Education

Tift Regional Health System (TRHS) and Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College have partnered to create a Dedicated Education Unit (DEU) at Tift Regional Medical Center in Tifton to provide senior nursing students an opportunity to acquire real-world, hands-on training with an experienced nurse.

“DEUs are nursing units that identify expert nurses and train them to become preceptors to nursing students,” said Carol M. Smith, RN, TRHS Vice President of Patient Care and Chief Nursing Officer. “DEUs work to improve clinical education by bringing expert nurses on the unit into closer contact with students so the nurses can share the knowledge they have acquired during their years of practice.”

Deborah Drummonds, RN, ABAC Assistant Professor of Nursing, said the DEU program will help create a more enriching clinical experience for the nursing student.

“The advantage to the nursing students is they benefit from the best of the clinical and academic worlds,” said Drummonds.

Drummonds added that the DEU program creates an environment of one-to-one learning between the student and experienced nurse which, in turn, will enhance the skills of the student and the nurse involved. In the long term, DEUs have been shown to help reduce the shortage of nurses, to improve the quality of patient care by focusing on expert clinical care, and to increase the retention of RNs within sponsoring healthcare organizations. DEUs nationwide have been shown to positively impact patient outcomes due to the positive clinical experience and increased opportunity for the student to function in the “real world” of patient care.

Debbie Brown, Clinical Educator and Student Liaison at Tift Regional Medical Center (TRMC), will coordinate the program. She holds bachelor’s degrees in nursing and adult education.

“The concept of this program is unique,” Brown said. “The selected

Continues on page 4
Birthday from page 1

“Our new strategic plan is titled Destination ABAC for a reason. We want prospective students to think of ABAC as a true destination college where they can start and finish their college degree. We want alumni and friends to consider ABAC as a destination that they can continue to associate with in a number of meaningful ways.”

Bridges, who took office on July 1, 2006, speaks from a unique historical perspective since he is the only ABAC president who is also an ABAC graduate (Class of ‘78).

Professor W.W. Driskell was the first principal of the Second District A&M School. The first class to graduate on June 14, 1910 included Joel Davis and Maude Paulk from Tift County and Charles Hinson from Grady County.

Today, Tift Hall houses administrative offices, the George T. Smith Parlor, and the ABAC History Room which is open to the public from 8 a.m. until 5:30 Monday through Thursday and from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. on Fridays. Lewis Hall is home to the Stafford School of Business, and Herring Hall is the location for the admissions and business offices.

The Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village is now a part of the ABAC campus as well as the Forest Lakes Golf Club. ABAC also enrolls students for classes at ABAC on the Square in downtown Moultrie. A recent study showed the impact of ABAC on the South Georgia economy to be over $261 million on an annual basis.

ABAC now offers bachelor’s degrees in Diversified Agriculture, Turfgrass and Golf Course Management, Biology, Business and Economic Development, and Natural Resource Management which features Forestry and Wildlife options. The Rural Studies bachelor’s degree is the only one of its kind in the United States and offers options in Social and Community Development, Politics and Modern Cultures, Writing and Communication, and Ag Communication.

During the 2015 fall term, ABAC enrolled 3,393 students from 153 of Georgia’s 159 counties, 25 states, and 22 countries. Almost 1,400 students live on the ABAC campus in modern housing complexes at ABAC Place and ABAC Lakeside.
Academic Support Counselors Host Advising Training
Advising season is about to begin and there are many questions about the changes in advising. The Academic Support Counselors are holding four advisor training sessions this week at the following times:

- **Wednesday at 3 and 4 p.m.**
- **Thursday at 12:30 and 3:30 p.m.**

Each session will be 50 minutes and held in Nursing 257. Attendees will be given a certificate of participation. Come learn about advising updates, learning support policies, and DegreeWorks. Please bring along any questions you may have.

Turf Students Represent ABAC In California
From February 8-12, six Turfgrass and Golf Course Management students represented ABAC at the Golf Industry Show and Superintendents Conference in San Diego, CA. Students worked the ABAC booth at the trade show, visited with alumni, and gained valuable experience networking with numerous golf course superintendents.

Art Show Opens with Reception on Tuesday
The ABAC Bowen gallery is pleased to present “Bowen Gallery Juried Art Exhibition”, a show of local artists’ brought together by Donna Hatcher’s Humanities class 1100. There will be an opening reception on Tuesday from 5-7 p.m. in Bowen Hall Room 121 on the ABAC main campus. Refreshments will be served.

Hatcher’s students have worked very hard to collect a wide range of pieces from artist specializing in photography, drawings and oil paintings. Please come out and help support these local artists and students. If you would like more information about the gallery, please contact Donna Hatcher via cellphone: 229.391-.4963 or email: dhatcher@abac.edu.

Be Sure to Pick Up Your BBQ Plate on Wednesday
Don’t forget that Wednesday’s dinner was taken care of by the ABAC Cattlemen’s Association. The plate includes: 1/2 pound beef BBQ, baked beans, potato salad, bread and a slice of cake. Please pick up your preordered plates from 5 -7 p.m. on Feb. 24 in the Ag Science Building. Contact Dr. Mary Ellen Hicks at mhicks@abac.edu for more information.

‘Snakes in the Stakes’ Was a Huge Success
During ‘Snakes in the Stakes’ last week, Dr. Vanessa Lane explained why snakes are one of nature’s most misunderstood creatures. She not only shared a few snakes from her large personal collection, but also demonstrated snake safety, snake anatomy, and gave tips about what to do if you find a snake in your home or yard. Over 125 people came out to learn more about snakes and to hold and pose with the snakes. Some faculty members even offered extra credit to students that were brave enough to hold the snakes.
students will be at the elbow of the expert nurse for the duration of the shift and will receive insight into the nuances of being in a realistic clinical setting. Students will have the opportunity to function inside the culture of nursing, and with this opportunity, a whole new set of communication skills will emerge. Communication between the interdisciplinary departments is essential for patient care. This experience will help build healthcare vocabulary and needed communication techniques.”

This partnership between TRHS and ABAC also benefits the experienced nurses taking part in the program with the nurses-in-training. Brown consulted with Joyce Z. Thielen, RN, Ph.D, Associate Dean of the School of Nursing at Elms College in Chicopee, Mass., prior to setting up the DEU program.

“The success seen by Elms College and affiliated hospitals helped us to realize that this program could be of great benefit to our facilities,” Brown said. “Dr. Thielen’s input was beneficial in helping develop the program.”

Six students were chosen by ABAC’s faculty and the TRHS staff to participate in the first DEU program slated to begin this month. Students within the program will work day and night shifts with their assigned preceptors. Medical West Unit, a nursing unit at TRMC, will house the program which focuses on the medical surgery aspect of patient care. Only senior nursing students are permitted to apply for the program.

“This experience will allow students to be better prepared for the world of nursing,” said Brown. “We want this to be the best experience for everyone involved and hope to grow from here.”

This year marks 50 years of nursing at ABAC. Drummonds said that TRHS is the ABAC nursing program’s most important clinical partner.

“The relationship spans the entire 50 years of the nursing program’s existence,” she said.

Coincidentally, TRHS is celebrating the 75th anniversary of providing quality care and compassion. The original 35-bed Tift County Hospital, located in Tifton at the corner of 12th Street and Tift Avenue, was formally dedicated on Feb. 7, 1941. The building is now the Pickett Building, home of the Tift County Health Department. Today, there is Tift Regional Health System, consisting of Tift Regional Medical Center and the TRMC West Campus in Tifton, Cook Medical Center in Adel and Tift Regional Physician Group with clinics located throughout South Central Georgia.

For more information on the TRHS/ABAC DEU program, interested persons can contact Drummonds at (229) 391-5020.

Celebrate Georgia Writer's Week in the ABAC Library

The ABAC Library will be kicking off “Celebrate Georgia Writers’ Week” next week with an event each night. The schedule of events is below:

Monday at 6:30 p.m.
Dr. Jordan Cofer discusses “The Life of Flannery O’Connor.” Refreshments provided by ABAC Alumni Affairs.

Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.
Local Authors Night (presented by the South Georgia Writers Guild & Pegasus). Come meet regional authors who will give readings, talk about the publishing process and have books for sale.

Wednesday at 7 p.m.
Dr. Brian Yost leads a screening and discussion of "The Color Purple." Refreshments provided by the office of the Dean of Students.

Thursday at 6:30 p.m.
Dr. Jeff Newberry’s book launch. Help celebrate the release of ABAC's Poet-in-Residence: Newberry's latest novel, "A Stairway to the Sea." Refreshments provided by the School of Liberal Arts.