



# Eastern-in-the-News



## JOBLESSNESS IN HARD TIMES MIGHT ALSO BRING LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

Moorefield, WV — Aug. 11, 2010 — High spirits on Wall Street do not always mean good news on Main Street. “The stock market keeps trending upwards, and investors seem to believe it’s a stable recovery,” noted Seyed Mirkhani, Academic Program Director for Business Technologies at Eastern WV Community and Technical College. “But we haven’t seen jobs come back at the same pace, so I don’t think it’s fair to say that we’re in full recovery yet.”

Yuki Noguchi, National Public Radio’s business correspondent, agrees. “The problem is that hopes for a recovery depend largely on when jobs come back,” she reported earlier this month. “Without jobs, people can’t spend. Without spending, businesses don’t hire. And that cycle isn’t yet broken.”

No one seems to know exactly what straw will break that cycle’s back, Eastern’s Mirkhani acknowledged. Still, he remains cautiously optimistic.

“Most experts believe that as we get into the fall and winter, the hiring numbers will rise,” he said. “And to prepare themselves to make the best advantage they can of that rebound that’s coming, right now just might be the best chance folks will have.”

### Financial Aid Available

When businesses do start hiring again, he reasoned, job-seekers with skills and learning will enjoy the best prospects. “At first glance, it may seem illogical in hard times to think about going back to school to earn a degree,” Mirkhani acknowledged. “But really, when you consider it carefully, it makes a lot of sense.”

Amanda Sites, Eastern’s Director of Financial Aid Services, agreed. “Thanks to one of the more sensible priorities of the state and federal governments,” she noted, “even with the downturn in the economy we can still find lots of ways to provide financial assistance to students who might have doubted that they could ever go to college.”

With few jobs available, many folks have extra time on their hands, and going to college to acquire new learning and skills, Mirkhani emphasized, is “one of the most productive and constructive things a person can do.”

“And at Eastern,” he pointed out, “late registration for this fall semester remains open through August 20.”

For Purgitsville’s Olivia McAvoy, turning the lemons of joblessness into the lemonade of advanced learning means fulfilling a lifelong goal. “Getting a B.A. in Business Management is something I’ve always wanted to pursue,” she said.

### Exciting, Proud Moment

McAvoy, a recent Eastern graduate, earned two associate degrees last year—an Associate in Science (A.S.) and an Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) in Business Management—and she took part in the college’s commencement ceremony this past May at Moorefield’s McCoy Theater.

As the first one in her family ever to graduate college, “that was a very exciting and proud moment to walk across that stage when I did,” she recalled.

Still, even with her twin degrees, the collapse of the economy in the fall of 2008, and its lingering, cruel aftermath of deep

recession and widespread unemployment, has made her job search futile.

So McAvoy, a 2003 graduate of Petersburg High School, decided that the time was right for her to double down, and to go after her cherished, longtime goal.

"I started an online bachelor's degree program in Business Management at Franklin University on August 15," she said.

#### **Convenience and Flexibility**

"Our partnership in the Community College Alliance (CCA) with Franklin University of Columbus, Ohio, lets Eastern students build their associate degree into a four-year bachelor degree," explained Program Director Mirkhani. "And they can fit it right into their busy, individual lives, because it's all online. In that format, they can earn their degrees right from their own hometown, and according to their own schedules."

For McAvoy, the convenience and flexibility of online courses offers strong advantages similar to those that she found so appealing at Eastern. "Eastern is a small, local school, within our community. And with me having a fulltime job, and 2 small children and a husband at home, it worked great—it was very flexible with my time."

Beyond the flexibility, McAvoy noted additional factors that contributed to her success at Eastern and to climbing those first few rungs on the ladder to her goal.

"The staff and the people there are great," she said. "I applied for financial aid, and it was a tremendous help. And if I ever had a problem, someone was always there."

With so many other obligations on her schedule when she began studying at

Eastern in 2005, she started as a part-time student "and worked my way up to fulltime."

#### **Find Solutions**

"And the teachers help you to understand. They work with you," she said, "and they direct you in the right way.

"My advisor was excellent too: if I had any problems or any concerns, I just went right to him, and he helped me find a solution and figure everything out."

In the future, once she completes her online Bachelor's degree in Business Management through Eastern's partnership with Franklin University, McAvoy is "planning on opening up my own daycare."

With the skills and knowledge she is acquiring through college, she reasons, she won't have to wait for businesses to start hiring—she'll be able to start up her own.

To register for fall semester, or for more information about Eastern's financial aid opportunities, programs of study, workforce training and community education, call toll free: 877-982-2322; or check the College's website: "[www.eastern.wvnet.edu](http://www.eastern.wvnet.edu)".

Serving the residents of Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Mineral, Pendleton and Tucker counties, Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College, fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, is a comprehensive and equal opportunity community and technical college bringing the resources and assets of Education That Works to the families, communities and employers of the Potomac Highlands.