Gulf Area Vo-Tech gets ready for the grade

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news editor

Evaluations are coming up, but at Gulf Area Vocational Technical School, it’s the faculty — not the students — who’s sweating the passing grade this time.

Tuesday night the trade school sponsored a banquet at V.F.W. Hall for its “graders,” the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools’ (SACS) evaluation team for accreditation.

The team is in Abbeville this week to evaluate curriculum and how curriculum is carried out, according to Gulf Area’s accountant Anna Pierce.

“SACS sends a team every five years to re-evaluate the school for accreditation,” said Pierce. “If the team has recommendations, we (Gulf Area) must abide by them and make the necessary changes in order to be re-certified,” she said.

The six areas to be evaluated at Gulf Area are: electricity and electronics; auto body repair and painting; diesel and auto mechanics; air conditioning, refrigeration and welding; practical nursing; carpentry and drafting; and office occupation and adult education.

Of the 439 students who attend Gulf Area, Pierce said the most popular curriculum offered is office occupation, which includes everything from secretarial stenography to computer courses.

While more than 75 faculty, staff, and guests dined on a roast beef and gravy dinner prepared by faculty members, invited dignitaries approached the podium to praise the trade school for its contribution to the city of Abbeville.

Rep. Sammy Theriot spoke of the importance of Gulf Area, describing it as one of the backbones of the community and parish.

Mayor Campisi added that the trade school is a great asset to the city. He said that not only is the school a good alternative form of education, but the city has utilized the school’s services “many, many, many times.”

“The school has always been there to lend a helping hand, to share its assets,” the mayor said.

As a token of appreciation for just one such example of Gulf Area’s civic-mindedness toward the Abbeville community, Campisi presented the school’s director, Mr. Robin, with a plaque for Gulf Area’s construction of the giant 12-foot-diameter omelet skillet used for the French Market Festival’s 5,000-egg omelet event.

“We (the city) had a problem,” said Campisi. “We had to construct a 12-foot skillet. We went the trade school and not only did it take the bull by the horns, but sure as shootin’ it was done.”

“And, most important, it was done in the spirit of community effort,” said Campisi. “Had it not been for the trade school, Abbeville would not have been able to construct the skillet because it couldn’t have afforded it.”