

# FIRST THURSDAY

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 3

**Franklin County Schools**

**MARCH, 2009**

Our *F*uture, Our *C*ommitment, Our *S*tudents

## Dropout Rate Decreases

### *More FCS Students Staying in School*

Franklin County Schools welcomes the good news of the annual dropout report from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

In the 2006-2007 school year, 158 students withdrew; that number decreased to 138 for the 2007-2008 school year. That's a 12.66% decrease in the number of students who dropped out from the year before.

The actual Franklin County Schools dropout rate decreased from 6.13% to 5.34% for 2007-2008. The statewide average is 4.97%.

"We are determined to help each and every student in our system – it is very encouraging to see the efforts of teachers, administrators

[SEE DROPOUT PAGE 13](#)

## Principal Profile

Learn more about Laurel Mill Elementary School Principal Genie Faulkner. [Page 2](#)

## State Champion

LHS wrestler nets state title. [Page 7](#)

## Math Superstars



After winning the team competition for the Regional MathCounts event, Terrell Lane Middle qualified for the state finals.

## Terrell Lane, Bunn Middle Flex Math Muscles in Regional Competition

Terrell Lane Middle and Bunn Middle math standouts have plenty to cheer about after competing in the Regional MathCounts competition hosted by Vance-Granville Community College.

Terrell Lane Middle School finished first in the competition, while Bunn Middle earned third place.

As a result, TLMS has qualified for the state team competition in Durham on March 20th. Representing TLMS were Max Cockman, Quint Hester, Sandy Wil-



Terrell Lane's Colleen Leonard received a \$500 scholarship from VGCC President Randy Parker for finishing first.

[SEE MATH PAGE 16](#)

# Right at Home



Laurel Mill Elementary School Principal Genie Faulkner is a strong believer in setting high expectations.

## ***Laurel Mill Elementary Principal Genie Faulkner***

It's safe to say careers in education runs in Genie Faulkner's family.

Faulkner, Principal of Laurel Mill Elementary School, grew up in a family of educators. Her father, Tommy Riggan, was a life-long educator and spent 18 years as Principal of Louisburg High School. Her mother, Martha, also a lifetime educator, spent her career that spanned more than three decades as a

teacher at Louisburg Elementary School.

"I basically grew up at Louisburg High School," Faulkner said. "It was natural for me to pursue a career in education."

After following her father around the halls of Louisburg High School as a child, Faulkner could tell she like the idea of becoming a teacher and working in the school setting.

She graduated from Louis-

burg High in 1990 and ventured east to Wilmington where she earned a teaching degree in elementary health and physical education.

Faulkner spent the next 10 years teaching PE at Laurel Mill and earned a Master degree in 1999 from N.C. State University.

After a decade in the classroom, the fitness savvy princi-

[SEE GENIE PAGE 10](#)

# FCS Teachers Of The Year

Monica Brodie, Bunn Elementary

Brandy Carter, Bunn High

Freda LeMay, Bunn Middle

Geoffrey Hawthorne, Cedar Creek Middle

Patricia Richardson, Edward Best Elementary

Shonda Malone, Franklinton Elementary

Susanne Harris, Franklinton High

Nicole Sheldon, Laurel Mill Elementary

Dean Reed, Long Mill Elementary

Deborah Carlson, Louisburg Elementary

Janet Taylor, Louisburg High

Maureen Lalino, Royal Elementary

Susan Barnes, Terrell Lane Middle

Judy Tart, Youngsville Elementary

All FCS Teachers of The Year will be highlighted in the April issue of *First Thursday*.

# Win-Win at BHS



BHS FFA members carefully fill a barrel with 150 ping-pong balls to be drawn out during the tractor raffle.

## Tractor Giveaway Huge Success for BHS

One man's junk is another man's treasure, or an entire program's for that matter.

Bunn High School vocational teacher Bob Frisbie has made a habit out of finding good deals on what would be expensive equipment through the North Carolina State Surplus auction.

The program's greatest return took place at the end of February when a John Deere Tractor was raffled off and won by Ronnie Jones of Pilot.

The tractor was originally purchased for \$500 through the state auction in February of 2008. In the final week of February of the current year, the tractor grossed \$15,000 of income for the Bunn vocational department and the BHS Chapter of Future Farmers of America.

The Bunn High vocational department took the tractor and repaired it as a means of a practical learning experience for the Ag-Mechanics class.

[SEE TRACTOR PAGE 18](#)



Ronnie Jones of Pilot proudly stands in front of his winnings. Jones purchased one ticket and earned the grand prize by being drawn last during the raffle.



### Franklin County Schools

# Black History Celebrations

Larry Andrews recreates Martin Luther King's *I Have a Dream* speech at Franklinton High.



FES students get an in-depth look in the BF Person Alumni room.

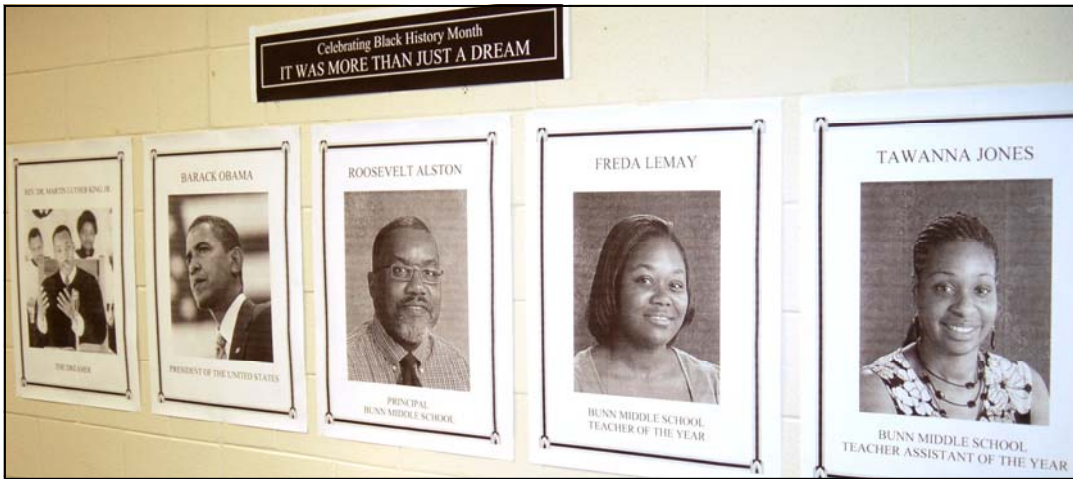


Artifacts from the former BF Person School for African Americans on display at FES.

African Art, culture on display in the lobby at Bunn Middle School.



# More Black History Month Celebrations



Dreams have become reality for many people at Bunn Middle School—including Principal Roosevelt Alston, Teacher of the Year Freda Lemay and Teacher Assistant of The Year Tawanna Jones. This display was also in the Bunn Middle lobby last month.



Black History Month door decorating competitions are growing in popularity. Above and left are some of the results from Cedar Creek Middle School.



YES students participate in a Black History music event.

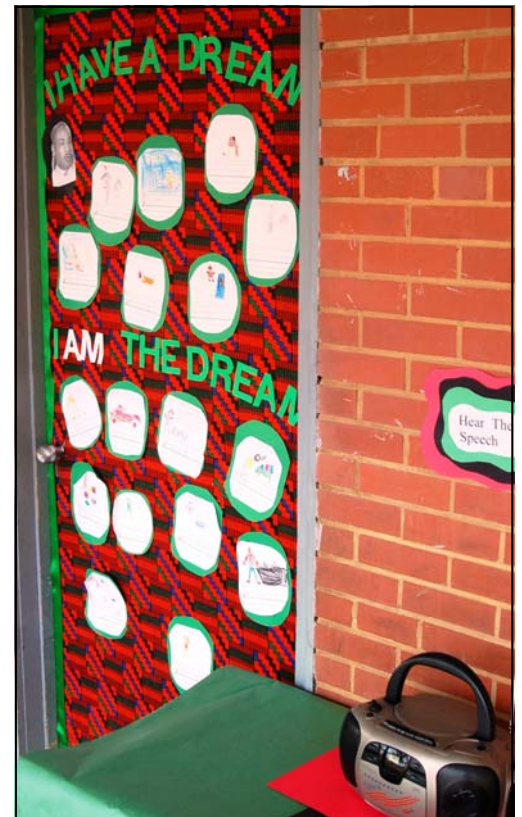


# And The Winners Are...



## Franklinton Elementary Black History Decorating Contest

Franklinton Elementary School held a school wide Black History door decorating contest, and the winners were determined during the final week of February. After a difficult and close judging process, Lucinda Ayscue's fourth-grade class was the grades 3-5 winner. Their display didn't quite end up on a door, but the focus on local Black History gave the display an extra edge. For grades K-2, Mrs. Jackie Kemp's kindergarten class prevailed for a solid use of color and student work, along with the addition of an audio version of Dr. Martin Luther King's *I Have a Dream* speech.



# State Champ!

Louisburg High's

*Mamour Camara*



UNDEFEATED

**58-0**

*135-pound  
wrestling champ*

## Camara Nets State Wrestling Title

The sign of a great champion is never settling. When Mamour Camara scored a perfect 800 on the math SAT in the fall of 2008, he had already proven he was a gifted person. During that time, there were rumblings about his talent on the wrestling mat. Through December, he was undefeated in the 135-pound class for 1A/2A state wrestling.

Camara never let up, and two months later he found himself at the state finals, and just like all of his previous matches during his senior season, he won. The state champion finished with an unblemished 58-0 record, setting a school

record and even more important earning a state championship in wrestling for the first time in Louisburg High School history.

Camara will receive official recognition from the Franklin County Board of Education on March 9th during a Board of Education meeting on the Riverside Campus (53 West River Road) in Louisburg.

LHS coach Phil Mueller is extremely proud of Camara and the rest of the team. LHS finished 10 overall in North Carolina for the 1A/2A classification at the annual state individual wrestling championships held in February.

# Employees of The Quarter

Mitzi Abbott (left) and Bonnie Inscoe (right) are the latest Franklin County Schools Employees of The Quarter. Abbott manages fixed assets and conducts internal school audits for the FCS finance department, while Inscoe is the Data Manager for Louisburg Elementary School. Both employees received plaques and checks for \$500 for their hard work and dedication to FCS. They were officially recognized at the February 23rd Franklin County Board of Education meeting. LES Principal William Harris spoke highly of Inscoe, as did Finance Officer Fred Carter of Abbott.



## FES Black History Biography Breakfast



Students in Ms. Bethea's Fourth Grade class at Franklinton Elementary School honored famous African Americans with a biography breakfast. Each student chose a famous African American and wrote a biography about that person. On Tuesday, February, 24 parents were invited; and the biographies were read. The class ate breakfast and heard from the likes of Barack Obama, Harriet Tubman, Oprah Winfrey, and Stevie Wonder among many others.

## GENIE

Continued from page 2

pal earned a spot at Laurel Mill as an assistant principal under former LMES principal Kim Ferrell. Also in 2004, Faulkner pocketed a Master of School Administration degree.

When Ferrell left to lead Long Mill Elementary School as the new Principal, Faulkner moved forward and applied for the principal vacancy at Laurel Mill.

Mother's Day 2008 brought good news as Faulkner was notified by FCS Superintendent Dr. Bert L'Homme that she would be the new principal of Laurel Mill.

"This is great," Faulkner said. "It was a nice surprise for Mother's Day. I love working here. I provide a service, and it's a way to give back to the community that has served me so well."

While working in a country setting at a school with about 300 students in it is very appealing, it's not always a walk in the park.

"Some days are tough," Faulkner said. "But you have to smile and keep moving forward. There is a lot of pressure that comes with being a principal, but I understand that. It's part of being a principal."

"I'm very connected with this community, and I encourage feedback from everyone. If everyone communicates and is honest, we always manage to work things out."

With any school, students are the number priority. Faulkner takes pride in developing strong relationships with parents and guardians of students.

"I try to build a trust with parents," Faulkner said. "You have to



Trust and high expectations are two elements to Genie Faulkner's principalship.

be consistent or you will end up in a hole. When parents realize you are focused on their child, they appreciate it. Ultimately it keeps you grounded. Every decision you make affects someone."

As the first full year as Principal of Laurel Mill, Faulkner realizes even more how special the school is to her.

"This is a very unique place," Faulkner said. "The staff really has a lot of fun and is very productive at the same time. We are a positive place, and that makes the environment for learning even better. We have teachers who drive long distances just to work here. That really means a lot because I know they could work other places if they wanted to."

It's no secret that we are in tough economic times, and that makes money decisions even tougher for Faulkner.

"Dealing with the budget can be

difficult," Faulkner said. "Money is ear-marked for certain items, and you may need it for other items."

The recent focus in terms of improving the learning environment has been increasing technology. Several classrooms have received laptop computers and Ipods through the Reading First program as well as interactive carts.

"The interactive classrooms and smart boards are really bringing learning to life," Faulkner said. "Our next step is to work on our computer labs."

Five years ago Franklin County Schools was introduced to the Whole Faculty Study Group initiative. This program was designed to encourage teacher collaboration to improve teaching skills or fix concerns within the school system.

"This has been a big help," Faulkner said. "Teachers are sharing their own teaching secrets, and as a result, we are all getting better. This is a direct correlation to increased student achievement."

As the end of the school year approaches, the tension builds within any school as preparations begin for end-of-year testing.

"I express the high expectations I have of everyone," Faulkner said. "The teachers do the same to the kids. You have to make the kids believe they can do it. It's all about expectations – I really believe that."

Laurel Mill was a high growth school under North Carolina Department of Public Instruction standards (ABCs) last year. Faulkner hopes to repeat that again this year.

Outside of the school, Faulkner

[SEE LGENIE PAGE 15](#)

# Jaguar Standout



## Jim Harris Voted FCS AP of The Year

Cedar Creek Middle School Assistant Principal Jim Harris (left in above photo) received a surprise visit from FCS Superintendent Dr. Bert L'Homme and Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Lynn Henderson one morning in late February. It was good news for Harris, as he was informed he is the Assistant Principal of The Year. Harris has been AP at Cedar Creek since the fall of 2005 and has worked with FCS since 1992 after retiring from the Air Force. CCMS Principal Brooke Wheeler (right) was voted Principal of The Year a few months ago. Voting is done by school and district administrators.





## FHS Career Day

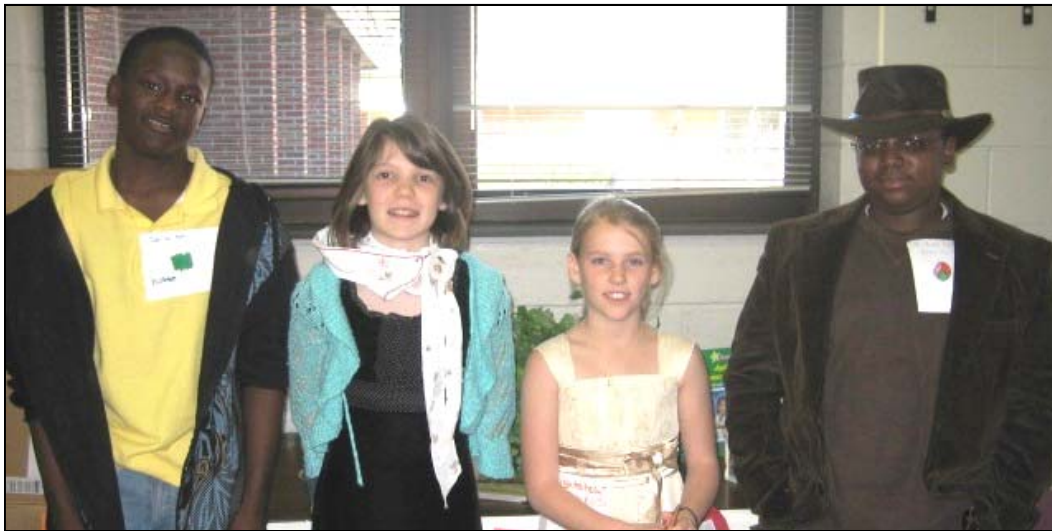
Franklinton High School students jumped at the chance to visit with area businesses and services that setup booths during the annual FHS Career Day presented by the FHS Business and Education Alliance in February. Students visited with the businesses during their lunch break. This event continues to be a strong success for Franklinton High School. More than 20 business and industries were represented.



## Lessons From Chile

Long Mill Elementary students who participate in the Before and After School Care Program received a special visit from Alicia Eller and Jeanne Faulkner of Chile. The natives of Chile brought examples of Chilean culture to the school by singing songs and dancing.

# Real Life History Assignment



Henry Hudson, Virginia Dare, Betsy Ross and Paul Revere

Sir Walter Raleigh



Bunn Elementary Students in Lauren Smith's class brought history to life by creating their very own wax museum of famous people in history from the colonial period. Each student researched a character and then developed a costume to wear for the wax museum. As students toured the museum, the characters came to life by reciting speeches.



Abraham Lincoln gets a visit from Principal Jewel Eason.



George Washington

## RATE

Continued from page 1

and staff result in a positive outcome,” FCS Superintendent Dr. Bert L’Homme said. “Our employees are working diligently to find ways to help students who are struggling as well as convince them to stay in school and earn a high school diploma. We made very nice gains this year, and we will continue to do everything we can do to make the dropout rate decrease. We value all students and want to make sure they are prepared for the future.”

Among the programs are the Freshman Academy program at Bunn High, Franklinton High and Louisburg High, the 21-credit high school diploma and dropout prevention counselors at each high school.

“There are a lot of factors to this, but I do think the freshman academy really helps,” Franklinton High School Principal Charles Fuller said. “The freshman seminar class helps students with study skills, reading levels, note taking, and a lot of different skills that they need to be successful students. If you are better equipped to be a student, then you are much more likely to be successful in your classes. If you’re successful in your classes, you are much less likely to drop out for academic reasons.”

“The teachers in the freshman academy are dedicated. They meet once a week, and they talk about kids in terms of kids who are struggling and come up with ways to turn the students around. They contact the parents to make sure the parents are in the loop. This kind of early intervention is really going a long way.”

In addition, the FCS course retrieval program is providing a secondary means for students to earn course credit. Students who fail a course or are unable to complete a course may enroll in an online program that provides a structured, rigorous setting to complete a course.

“Course recovery gives students an opportunity to finish a course without falling behind in their other studies,” Louisburg High School Principal Freda Clifton said. “Programs like this show that our school system is working hard to meet the needs of all students.”

The 21-credit high school diploma program began in 2007-2008 and has convinced a handful of students



Fewer students are dropping out of school across the state.

to complete the state graduation requirements who otherwise may have not earned a diploma. The standard FCS policy requires students to complete 28 credits of coursework to earn a high school diploma.

“I feel like the 21-credit program is helping us get kids on track who are behind,” Bunn High School Principal Robin Faulkner said. “In the past we did not have an alternative. This provides hope and motivations for some of our students.”

“They are still taking the core classes specified for graduation requirements. They have to meet all of the same criteria. It’s a rigorous course load, and it can mean the difference between getting a diploma and not. The ultimate goal is for our students to get a high school diploma.”

Statewide North Carolina high schools reported that 4.97 percent of students dropped out of school during the 2007-08 academic year.

This means that 1,898 fewer students decided to drop out in 2007-08 than in the previous year. Overall, 22,434 students out of approximately 450,000 North Carolina high school students dropped out of school in 2007-08.

This marks the first decrease in the state’s rate since 2004-05.

The rate in 2006-07 was 5.24 percent with 23,550 students leaving before graduation.

“This is good news for North Carolina. Local schools are using all of the tools available to help students stay in school,” said State Superintendent June Atkinson. “The credit for this success goes to local educators for finding ways to re-engage students and to students and their families for recognizing the need to stay in school.”

- Nathan Moreschi



## TLMS Students Receive Town Recognition

Terrell Lane Middle School students in Katie Tatum's science class have been a part of an on-going class project that leads to cleaner streets, a cleaner Tar River and easier flow for storm water. The students volunteer to pick up trash in drains and in the streets of the town. As a result of their efforts, the Louisburg Town Council recognized the students and awarded them with certificates at a recent Town Council meeting. In the front row are Charleigh Duke, Jonathan Yarborough, Elijah Thomas, Yahaira Solis and Bradley Dowdy. In the back row are Tanika Tucker, Shanta Williams, Joshua Shepherd, Dathan Pope, Javier Granados and Joshua Lusky. Not pictured, but present at the meeting is Terrence Hunt.

## GENIE

Continued from page 10

enjoys spending time with her husband Ricky and two sons John Allen (5) and Riggan (8). Both are students at Laurel Mill.

Faulkner's hobbies include running, church and sports.

"I really enjoy running," Faulkner said. "It gives me time to think, and it is a great stress reliever."

She recently competed in a half-marathon and has a long-term goal of competing in a full marathon.

Faulkner isn't going any where any time soon and is thrilled to have the opportunity to lead Laurel Mill.

"When dealing with children, you never know the impact you have. It's very important to stay connected to the students. I don't want that to ever end."

- Nathan Moreschi



TLMS Math Team members are Ivan Cockman, Mark Denton, Max Cockman, Colleen Leonard, Zoe Hinton, Ashley Cargill and Quint Hester. Not pictured is Sandy Williams.

# MATH

Continued from page 1

Williams, Ivan Cockman, Ashley Cargill, Mark Denton, Zoe Hinton and Colleen Leonard. Cockman, Cargill, Leonard and Denton will represent the team on March 14th.

Hinton finished third overall as

an individual and earned a spot in the state individual competition, also on March 20th. Bunn Middle's Jenna Perry was second overall and will also compete as an individual.

Helping the team earn the bronze medal were Perry, Cassidy Ingram, Sara Mylin and Natalie DeFruscio. Terrell Lane's

Colleen Leonard was the top individual. As a result, Leonard earned a \$500 scholarship to Vance-Granville Community College. In a special afternoon competition that emphasizes speed, Denton was first. Debra Fray and Helen Davis coached Terrell Lane, while Bunn was led by Brent Perry.

Bunn Middle took home third place overall and was led by a second place individual performance from Jenny Perry (front). In the middle of the photo are Sara Mylin, Cassidy Ingram and Natalie DeFruscio. In the back row are VGCC President Randy Parker and Bunn Middle School math teacher and team coach Brent Perry.

Photo provided by Andrew Beal of VGCC.



## Bunn High Mock Trial Team Wins!



The Bunn High School Mock Trial team competed in the Wade Edwards Mock Trial Competition February 21<sup>st</sup>, at the Pitt County Courthouse in Greenville, NC. Bunn had two teams compete against other regional high schools in successfully arguing both sides of a civil court case. The students had been working on this case since October. Bunn was particularly thankful the legal advice from attorney Jeff Scott Thompson, who practices law in Louisburg, NC. In the end, the Wildcats were crowned champions. Krislyn Tyler received the best attorney award, and Robert Windsor received the best witness award. Participating for the green team for Bunn were Jasmine Brodie, Phillip Tippet, Jordan Wilson, Kwinlyn Tyler, Troy Lensen, Paul Schmitt, Crystal White, Justine White and alternate Alicia Allen. The gold team was represented by Krislyn Tyler, Deanna Tabron, Jacquelynn Berton, Robert Windsor, Paris Cotton, Alex Berry, Candace Eaton, Jessica Barker and alternate Arthur King.



Master of Ceremonies Jason Aycok officially opens the auction.

## TRACTOR

Continued from page 4

There were leaks and various other mechanical problems, but in the end, the class repaired the tractor to excellent running order.

From that point, students in horticulture classes at Bunn High used the tractor for some landscaping projects. As time progressed, Frisbie and his students began to wonder if they really needed the tractor anymore.

"We were getting use out of it, but we really could do without it," Frisbie said. "So we thought for a long time to come up with a way to get rid of it in which everyone could take advantage of it."

The answer was a reverse raffle. A total of 150 tickets were sold for \$100 each, totaling \$15,000. FFA members who sold at least five tickets earned a free trip to FFA camp this summer. Those not selling tickets did earn a discounted rate. FFA

camp costs \$200 per person. BHS sends 50 students to FFA camp each year.

February 24<sup>th</sup> marked the night of the big auction. The Bunn High vocational shop was packed with more than 100 people who were hoping to be the lucky winner of the polished John Deere gem.

While the balls were retracted from the spinning drum one at a time by BHS alumni and current students, patrons enjoyed free hot dogs, sweet tea and ice cream. All were donated by former Bunn High students including Austin Murray (hot dogs), Johnny Gardner (sweet tea) and John Vollmer (ice cream). Bunn High alum Jason Aycok kept the crowd alive during the calling of the numbers by serving as the Master of Ceremonies. In addition to the grand prize, those present won door prizes. Two of the prizes were crisp \$100 bills.

"It really means a lot to have those guys come back and contribute like they did," Frisbie said.

From fixing the tractor, to using it,

to the actual auction, Frisbie firmly believes his students learned a great deal.

"This was a win-win situation for the students, the agricultural program, the school and the community. They all benefited from this," Frisbie said.

Although this was a great set of circumstances for Bunn High, the search for great deals will not end. In fact, Frisbie scored a deal on a Toyota truck through the state auction for just \$300. There is a sweeping mechanism that doesn't work, but that will probably be torn apart and used for scrap metal for other projects.

Frisbie's class will add a flat bed to the truck and potentially make it a dumping truck.

"I don't know if we'll ever hit a home run like we did with the tractor, but we will keep looking," Frisbie said. "It's a tremendous help to the program."

- Nathan Moreschi