



PHOTO. 4B

The Bradbury Art Museum hosts "Radius 1."

NAACP, BSA push BLM movement forward on campus Organizations encourage voter registration and plan march

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The flame ignited under the Black Lives Matter movement once again this summer as college students took to the streets to protest the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, among others, as the fight against social injustice continued.

While people of all ages protested and continue to protest, the A-State Black Student Association and A-State NAACP partake in many events on A-State's campus to drive the movement forward.

The A-State athletics department held a BLM march of its own Aug. 31 where student athletes marched for the cause and now another march, this time with the whole student body invited, is set to take place tomorrow at 10:30 a.m.

"Me and Jady Lewis are the creators of the event," A-State BSA President Courtney Atkins said. "It's been a tough hassle (to set up the event) because of corona. We brought that idea that we did want to have an all inclusive event, not just athletes."

Atkins got a team together and sent mass emails to Black professors and faculty around campus to let them know about the march.

Atkins also invited Chancellor Dr. Kelly Damphousse and Athletic Director Terry Mohajir to the march.

Students, student athletes and deans from around campus will speak at the event. "As a college student, I think our role would be more of the



A-State NAACP President Dominique Phillips participates in a Black Lives Matter march during the summer. Although NAACP did not plan any of the marches that happened in Jonesboro during the summer, they did support and help keep them peaceful.

advocating and educating," A-State NAACP President Dominique Phillips said. "Whether that's educating and advocating for ourselves or for others. Especially for educating others. Especially African American college students, I think we've been grandfathered into that role of making others understand the plight of minorities."

Phillips noted what current college students do in the present will affect them when they graduate, when those students' children graduate and so on.

"We are the future," Phillips said. "We're making the future up. That's really and truly our responsibility as college students, is to mold the future and change it for the better. The only way to do that is to vote, change,

educate, advocate, do it all."

The BLM movement has been around for a long time, but really increased in support and gained more attention this summer.

However, Atkins said the drive cannot go away just because summer is over. "We feel like it needs to be not just important over the summer or before we got here, it's still a reoccurring issue," Atkins said.

With the fight against police brutality being at the front of the BLM movement, Phillips said she does not believe all police officers are bad and that she has met many good police officers, especially in the Jonesboro area.

However, with social media and video footage of police brutality, more people can see the reality of what happens.

"But, with this Black Lives

Matter movement, and to the people who were able to turn a blind eye and say, 'Well I've never seen that happen,' or 'that has never happened to me,' they're now able to see this is real," Phillips said.

The A-State NAACP did not plan any protests over the summer, but the chapter did support and helped keep the protests peaceful.

While marching stands as a significant part of the BLM movement, Phillips emphasized it is time to take even more action.

A-State's NAACP chapter has really focused on different aspects of voting.

"We're trying to see what we can do to create lasting change," Phillips said. "We're saying voter registration, going out to make your voice heard and we're

PHOTO COURTESY OF A-STATE NAACP

saying be a part of the census."

Currently, the A-State NAACP partakes in a city-wide initiative with many student organizations and community organizations to knock on doors throughout Jonesboro making sure citizens are counted for the census and registered to vote.

A-State's NAACP heads the event while partnering with the City of Jonesboro and the U.S. Census Bureau.

On Saturday, the NAACP and other student organizations plan to set up in residence halls across campus and Sept. 26 at Wolf Creek and Stadium View.

"A-State NAACP is a bipartisan organization," Phillips said. "We don't promote a single political party. We just promote and advocate for you all to get

out and let your voice be heard."

Phillips said the A-State NAACP educates student voters on multiple platforms that could be voted on and gives the same amount of attention to the left and right.

The organization shows students how to go and find information to educate themselves on the upcoming elections.

Phillips emphasized the importance of looking past just the presidential election and also looking at elections for the senate and congress.

"We're really focusing on local politics too," Phillips said. "That directly affects us. We're in Jonesboro, even if it's just for four years, we're letting people know that we are still living in Jonesboro and this affects us. Go and vote, I can't say it enough."

During the summer, Black A-State students discussed their experiences on campus under the hashtag #BlackatAstate on Twitter. On Oct. 15, the NAACP will host "#BlackatAState", an event where administration and Chancellor Damphousse have been invited to talk about the content of those tweets.

"We are inviting them to sit down at a table and we'll both, on both ends, come up with solutions to better the black atmosphere and to better the minority atmosphere at A-State," Phillips said.

NAACP also plans to march to the polls Oct. 19 and Nov. 3.

CONTINUED:
NAACP, 4A

VOTE A-State teams up with other registered student organizations on campus

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Though the 2020 Election is still weeks away, VOTE A-State is up against the registration deadline. In response, they've put together a week full of registration events across Northeast Arkansas.

VOTE A-State is a relatively new student organization established to help students and residents of the area get registered to vote.

The organization was established in February, and has been hard at work ever since. VOTE A-State President Ryan Baldwin said getting students involved in elections is crucial.

"People our age — young

people — are less than 50% likely to vote. Youth voters only show up about 48% of the time compared to upwards of 70% of older people. It's not that our voices aren't important, it's that we don't use them," Baldwin said.

This week alone, VOTE A-State has four major events to promote their cause. All week, students will see representatives of the organization — as well as many other SRO's — all over campus.

On Tuesday, the organization worked in tandem with Volunteer A-State on a registration drive.

The event took place in three locations on campus to maximize exposure to students. Students from both organizations set up at the Student Union, the



Photo by: Chase Gage | News Writer

VOTE A-State set up a voter registration booth in front of the Dean B. Ellis library and across other areas on campus.

Dean B. Ellis Library and the arch to help students register to vote. The event was co-created by Kaleb Webb, an executive member of Volunteer A-State.

After the Tuesday appetizer, VOTE A-State is set to work with the College Republicans for a registration drive on Wednesday from

11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Humanities building as well as the arch and Student Union.

On Thursday, the group will still have boots on the ground as they plan to work with the Black Student Association as part of their Unity March. The BSA will march to the student union, and upon arrival, will work with VOTE A-State to register as many students of all creeds and colors as possible. This event was set up by Courtney Atkins, President of the Black Student Association.

Saturday, from 9 a.m. to noon, students from various SROs, including the Young Democrats and HOLA (Hispanic Outreach & Latino/a/x Appreciation) will all work together to set

up registration tables across campus, primarily at residence halls. The lead organizer for the event is not a student, but Craighead County NAACP President Dominique Phillips. The event will cap off a week of unprecedented registration efforts across the Arkansas State University campus.

"People that vote decide the direction of the country," Baldwin said. "Period. And that goes for the city, the state, and the national level. If you want people to talk about things you care about, you have to have your voice heard. If only 40% of us show up, that won't happen."

The deadline for voter registration in Arkansas is Oct. 5.