

# Sullivan County News

Thursday, October 2, 1997 ■ Page 9

## To benefit minorities

# Area church, Northeast form alliance

"In partnership to give young persons opportunities. . ."

That is how Pastor Ronnie Collins views his church's new alliance with Northeast State Technical Community College to provide scholarships to deserving minority students in the Tri-Cities region.

The congregation of Spirit and Truth Full Gospel Baptist Church in Kingsport has established a scholarship fund through Joshua Generation Outreach Ministry to supplement Northeast State's Minority Grants program that awards maintenance fees and textbook stipends to qualified students. The initial Joshua fund awards, totaling more than \$4,000, were made to nine Northeast State students for their 1997 Fall Semester maintenance fees. The fund also paid the textbook stipends for three additional students.

According to Collins, the scholarship fund is a response to negative stereotypes that persist in the black community—prejudicial stereotypes generated by both blacks and whites—that can push a young person away from seeking higher education.

"We believe that providing a child or young person with opportunities will help to counteract those bad perceptions," said Collins. "Opportunities begin with education. This fund is a wake-up call for the community—to get black and white on board—to come together to do something posi-

The church has set a fundraising goal of \$15,000 for the first year to fund the scholarship program. Collins said future scholarships will cover two semesters and will include the textbook stipends.

Spirit and Truth Gospel Baptist Church, sometimes referred to as the "smallest big church in the Tri-Cities" for its community outreach, numbers 40 members and meets in Room 239 of the Renaissance Center in Kingsport on Sundays at 9 a.m. Collins said the congregation became familiar with Northeast State through some of its members' involvement on the Northeast State Minority Advisory Committee and by witnessing the college's dedication to providing opportunities to its students.

"Northeast State's high job employment rates among its graduates and the quality of education is very impressive," Collins said. "We believe that students can receive an excellent education in a short amount of time at Northeast State and then find good jobs or continue their education at four-year colleges."

Collins said the church decided to establish the Joshua Fund when the college's Minority Grants program exhausted its funds with several qualified applicants remaining on the list.

"Northeast State is extremely grateful for the contribution of Pastor Collins and the Joshua



*Pastor Ronnie Collins (right) and his wife, Gwen, present Northeast State President Dr. William W. Locke with the check for the initial Joshua Generation Outreach Ministry Scholarship Grants*

Ministry," said Dr. William W. Locke, president of the college. "Their generosity and cooperative spirit is an example of the community relationships that help sustain our tradition of service to the region."

1997 Joshua Fund Scholars are Jeremy Fain, Valerie

Smith, and Whitney Ray of Johnson City and Katheryn Hall, Gilbert Miller, Calvin Williams, Anthony Horton, Ciana Authier, and Michi Moore of Kingsport. Textbook stipend recipients are Carla Releford, Charlise Gilliam, and Latwan Wolfe of Kingsport.