Mountain Valley District

2026 Merit Badge University

Participant and Leader Guide

Event Information

Date:	November 21, 2026
Time:	8:00am – 4:30pm
Location:	Blue Ridge Community College, 1 College Lane, Weyers Cave, VA 24486

Registration

Register online via Black Pug at: https://scoutingevent.com/763-Meritbadgeuniversity

Fee: $10 per youth participant, no adult fee

Register by: November 16, 2026

Merit badge selection is part of the individual registration via Black Pug. Each merit badge has a specified class size limit and is on a first come, first served basis.

NOTE: Out of council troops are invited to camp at Camp Shenandoah FREE OF CHARGE for Merit Badge University weekend.

Description

The purpose of a Merit Badge University (MBU) is to offer Scouts an opportunity to meet with highly qualified professionals to learn and foster the development of lifelong interests. We are pleased to present this exciting event. This is an in-person event where each Scout may work toward the completion of up to two (2) merit badges.

Questions by parents should first go to Scoutmaster/Unit Leader. Scoutmasters/Unit Leaders having questions should contact or email the event organizers.

NOTE: When selecting merit badges to take during the event, pay attention to the specific sessions that the merit badge is offered. Also, pay attention to the limits on capacity for a merit badge, especially those offered only once during the event.

Arrival & Check In

Scouts should arrive between 8:00am–8:45am and report to the Plecker Atrium. Classroom locations will be distributed at this time.

Blue Cards/Scoutbook

Blue Cards (Merit Badge Application, BSA Form #34124), are not required. An electronic printout from Scoutbook indicating that the initial unit leader meeting took place, or a letter from the Scoutmaster giving permission.

Program Schedule

Time	Activity	Location
8:00 – 8:45 AM	Registration & Check In	Atrium of Plecker
8:45 – 9:15 AM	Opening	Plecker Auditorium

Time	Activity	Location
9:15 AM – 12:00 PM	Session 1	Various Rooms
12:00 – 1:30 PM	Lunch	Houff Student Center
1:30 – 4:30 PM	Session 2	Various Rooms

How To Register

1. Registration will be done by individual parents or guardians.
2. Fill out application form online at https://scoutingevent.com/763-Meritbadgeuniversity
3. Select desired morning and afternoon merit badges.
4. MBU registrar sends an email to Scout/Parent/Scoutmaster/Unit Leader confirming assignment.
5. Parent (or Guardian) Permission
6. By signing the application, a parent (or legal guardian) gives permission for the Scout to attend and participate in the Virginia Headwaters Council Merit Badge University.
7. In case of emergency, every effort will be made to contact parents (or legal guardian). In the event they cannot be reached, the signature gives permission to a licensed physician or emergency first responder to secure proper treatment, including hospitalization, anesthesia, surgery, or injections of medication for the scout.
8. By signing the application, the Scout's parents (or legal guardian) agree to pick up the child at 4:30 PM. NO LATE PICK-UPS PLEASE!
9. Emergency phone numbers given must be valid on November 21, 2026. If a Scout requires help with medications that he needs to take while at MBU, please provide instructions on the application.
10. The MBU Health and Safety Staff will not administer any treatments unless specified in the application and supplied by the Scout.
11. If a Scout has any other special needs, please provide instructions.

Late Registration

No late registration or on-site registration will be accepted.

Merit Badges Offered

Merit Badge	Class Size Max	Morning	Afternoon
American Business	11		X
American Heritage	12	ALL DAY	
Art	10	X	
Automotive Maintenance	15	ALL DAY	
Chess	15	X	X
Citizenship in the Community	27		X
Citizenship in the Nation	15	X	
Citizenship in the World	30	X	
Communication	16	ALL DAY	
Composite Materials	CANCELLED for 2026		

Merit Badge	Class Size Max	Morning	Afternoon
Crime Prevention	15	X	
Digital Technology	20	ALL DAY	
Emergency Preparedness	16	ALL DAY	
Entrepreneurship & Salesmanship	10	X	
Fingerprinting	15 / 16	X	X
Genealogy	8	X	
Graphic Arts	7	ALL DAY	
Journalism	10	X	
Personal Management	16 / 9	X	X
Scouting Heritage	16	X	
Signs, Signals & Codes	15 / 16	X	X
Sustainability	10	ALL DAY	
Traffic Safety	8 / 10	X	X
Truck Transportation	12	X	
Veterinary Medicine	15		X
Weather	10	ALL DAY	

Meet Your Counselors — Instructor Directory

Merit Badge	Instructor	Email
American Business	Larry Rodriguez	rodriguezsurety@gmail.com
American Heritage	Joe Hoeing	joebhoeing@gmail.com
Art	Amanda Dollar	amandalynndollar@gmail.com
Automotive Maintenance	Sam King	springerhillfarm@gmail.com
Chess	John Blair	johncblair2@gmail.com
Citizenship in the Community	Jaime Penney (with Toy Andrews)	jaime.penney@gmail.com / dr.toy.andrews@gmail.com
Citizenship in the Nation	Jaime Penney	jaime.penney@gmail.com
Citizenship in the World	Kent Baisley	baisleykp@gmail.com
Communication	Kent Baisley	baisleykp@gmail.com
Crime Prevention	Cody Glick	cgwolfman@gmail.com
Digital Technology	Jonelle Kinback	jckinback@gmail.com
Emergency Preparedness	Dr. Lawrence Whitehurst	lrwhitehurstmd@gmail.com
Entrepreneurship & Salesmanship	Larry Rodriguez	rodriguezsurety@gmail.com
Fingerprinting	Jeremiah Nugent	jeremiahnugent@yahoo.com
Genealogy	John Arpin	arpinfamily@gmail.com

Merit Badge	Instructor	Email
Graphic Arts	Brian Dibb	briandibb@gmail.com
Journalism	Margi Roache	margiroache@gmail.com
Personal Management	Lewis Kingston (with Mike Bonham)	lewiskingston@hotmail.com / mike@eqros.com
Scouting Heritage	Ed Palmer	ed.palmer@gmail.com
Signs, Signals & Codes	Ronnie Sweet	pack344leader@hotmail.com
Sustainability	Jeff Boutet	jeffcb@gmail.com
Traffic Safety	Adam Campbell	acampbell97@gmail.com
Truck Transportation	Kent Baisley	baisleykp@gmail.com
Veterinary Medicine	Dr. Tracy Norman	drtracynorman@gmail.com
Weather	Bonnie Dawson	ghanylady@gmail.com

Program Details

Preparation

Merit Badge University should not be considered another "school" where the pupils sit and stare for hours on end. Scouts should come prepared to participate in a seminar. The counselor's job is to encourage self-discovery and then test that each Scout has the minimum knowledge and does the requirements. Each Scout should have read his merit badge pamphlet and prepared answers to each requirement. Scouts should be ready to take notes and come prepared with a notebook with blank paper and a pencil. Remember one goal of the merit badge advancement system is to develop individual growth and initiative.

Partial Completion

If a Scout is unable to complete his merit badge, the "PARTIAL" completion will be noted on his Merit Badge Application, which will be returned to the Scout. MBU Counselors are seldom available to serve as counselor after MBU ends, unless arrangements are made afterwards which are acceptable to the Scout, his parents, and the counselor.

Conduct and Discipline

As a participant of the Merit Badge University, I will:

- Observe the Scout Oath (or Promise) and the Scout Law.
- Wear my official uniform when requested.
- Attend the classes I am assigned.
- Be personally responsible for breakage, damage, or loss of property.
- Be courteous to other students, counselors, and staff.
- Clean up my classroom at the end of each session.
- Clean up my trash after eating a snack or lunch.
- Cell phones should be silenced throughout the event and only used with the permission of the merit badge counselor or in an emergency.

Uniforms

Scouts should wear the official field uniform for MBU. Most units call this a "class A" uniform. The uniform you normally wear to a troop meeting will be fine.

Snacks and Lunch

- Lunch is not provided and there are no provisions at MBU for food service or food preparation of any kind.
- Each scout must bring their own lunch including drink.
- All food must be consumed in the cafeteria. No food or drink is allowed to be consumed outside of the cafeteria.
- Counselors are permitted to drink in classrooms, but only covered containers should be used.
- Scouts are expected to clean up after themselves.

Health, Safety, and First Aid

- Scouts should take their own medicine if needed during class.
- No running inside or outside the buildings.
- No roller blades, roller shoes, roller skates, or skateboards are allowed.
- No alcohol, illegal drugs, fireworks, firearms, slingshots, or anything else that might distract from the learning environment. No tobacco or coffee for Scouts.
- The MBU First Aid station is at the Headquarters table.

Lost and Found

The MBU Lost and Found is located at the Headquarters table. The return of lost items after the end of MBU is not guaranteed, so be sure to check before you leave. Put your name on EVERYTHING: books, papers, lunch boxes, coats, hats – EVERYTHING.

Prerequisite Requirements

Merit Badge	Pre-Req	Comments
American Business	1b	Learn about the Industrial Revolution and three influential business leaders.
American Business	2a	Learn the three basic financial statements.
American Business	5	Choose a business and bring basic information about it.
American Business	6	Choose three business careers and one career of interest.
American Heritage	NONE	
Art	NONE	No formal prerequisites. Scouts are encouraged to visit an art gallery or museum in advance — in person or virtually — and reflect on a piece they saw. Photos of 2 pieces of art you have made are encouraged (for Requirement 4); the class will try to complete 4 pieces on site.
Automotive Maintenance	1b	Discuss with your counselor the safety equipment, tools, and clothing used while checking or repairing a motor vehicle. Use this equipment, tools, and/or clothing (when needed or called for) in meeting the requirements for this merit badge.
Automotive Maintenance	12	Find out about three career opportunities in the automotive industry. Pick one and find out the education, training, and experience required for this profession. Discuss this with your counselor, and explain why this profession might interest you.
Chess	NONE	If you have a chess set, could you please bring it with you.
Citizenship in the Community	3a	Attend an in-person meeting of your city, town, or county council or school board, local court session; OR another state or local governmental meeting approved in advance by your counselor.
Citizenship in the Community	8	Develop a public presentation (such as a video, slide show, speech, digital presentation, or photo exhibit) about important and unique aspects of your community. Include information about the history, cultures, and ethnic groups of your community; its best features and popular places where people gather; and the challenges it faces. Stage your presentation in front of your counselor or a group, such as your patrol or a class at school.
Citizenship in the Nation	5	Watch the national evening news for five days in a row or read the main stories in a national media organization (e.g., a newspaper or news website) for five days in a row. Discuss the national issues that you learned about with your counselor. Choose one issue and explain how it affects you, your family, and community.
Citizenship in the Nation	7a / 7b / 7d	Do ONE of the following: (a) Visit a place that is listed as a National Historic Landmark or that is on the National Register of Historic Places. Tell your counselor what you learned about the landmark or site and what you found interesting about it. (b) Tour your state capitol building or the U.S. Capitol. Tell your counselor what you learned about the capitol, its function, and the history. (d) Choose a United States national monument that interests you. Using books, brochures, the internet (with your parent or guardian's permission), and other resources, find out more about the monument. Tell your counselor what you learned and explain why the monument is important to this country's citizens.
Citizenship in the World	NONE	

Merit Badge	Pre-Req	Comments
Communication	4	Interview someone you know fairly well, like, or respect because of his or her position, talent, career, or life experiences. Listen actively to learn as much as you can about the person. Then prepare a speech to deliver to the group.
Communication	5	Attend a public meeting (city council, school board, debate) approved by your counselor where several points of view are given on a single issue. Practice active listening skills and take careful notes of each point of view. Prepare an objective report that includes all points of view that were expressed, and share this with your counselor.
Communication	6	If props are needed to teach a skill, please bring them.
Composite Materials	CANCELLED for 2026	This class will not be offered.
Crime Prevention	3	Crime in your Community, State, Nation — research news coverage of three crimes of different types; research how common these crime types are in your state or in the United States.
Crime Prevention	4b & 4c	Conduct a security survey of your home and neighborhood using BSA Security Checklists 1 & 2; take photos of good and bad crime prevention examples to share with the class.
Crime Prevention	10	Interview someone who works in crime prevention.
Crime Prevention	11	Research a career path that would involve crime prevention.
Digital Technology	1	View the Personal Safety Awareness "Digital Safety" video (with your parent or guardian's permission). Need parent's permission for some of the requirements, including spending time browsing the web.
Emergency Preparedness	9	Earn the First Aid Merit Badge (required). Prepare ahead as much as possible: 1b; 2a, 2b, 2c; 3a; 7b; 8c; 10a, 10b.
Entrepreneurship	1	Entrepreneurship Basics.
Entrepreneurship	3	Interview an Entrepreneur.
Entrepreneurship	4	Develop a Business Idea.
Fingerprinting	NONE	
Genealogy	2	Do ONE of the following: (a) Create a timeline for yourself or for a relative. Then write a short biography based on that time line. (b) Keep a journal for six weeks. You must write in it at least once a week.
Genealogy	3	With your parent or guardian's help, choose a relative or a family acquaintance you can interview in person, by telephone, or by email or letter. Record the information you collect so you do not forget it.
Genealogy	4a	Name three types of physical genealogical resources and where you can find them, and explain how these resources can help you chart your family tree.
Genealogy	5	Contact ONE of the following individuals or institutions. Ask what genealogical services, records, or activities this individual or institution provides, and report the results: (a) A genealogical or lineage society (b) A professional genealogist (someone who gets paid for doing genealogical research) (c) A surname organization, such as your family's organization (d) A genealogical educational facility or institution (e) A genealogical record repository of any type (courthouse, genealogical library, state or national archive, state library, etc.)

Merit Badge	Pre-Req	Comments
Genealogy	6	Begin your family tree by listing yourself and include at least two additional generations. You may complete this requirement by using the chart provided in the Genealogy merit badge pamphlet or the genealogy software program of your choice.
Genealogy	7	Complete a family group record form, listing yourself and your brothers and sisters as the children. On another family group record form, show one of your parents and his or her brothers and sisters as the children. This requirement may be completed using the chart provided or the genealogy software program of your choice.
Graphic Arts	NONE	Full day with a break for lunch. This course will introduce Scouts and Leaders to silkscreen their own shirts for around $3.00 per shirt. Units will be provided with silkscreens (front and back), 12 blank shirts, a squeegee, and fabric ink so they can create 12 custom class B shirts during the class and be equipped with everything you need for production for years to come. Units should coordinate to order their blank shirts and provide the instructor with the digital file for the unit designs no later than November 8th, 2026 (804-878-6571 / briandibb@gmail.com). $75 cost of supplies per unit; units will keep their silkscreens for future use.
Journalism	1	Look up the definitions, have a basic understanding of the First Amendment. Be prepared for a discussion on ethics.
Journalism	2	Do your best to complete either Option A or B — be prepared to present a short explanation to the group of what you saw when visiting the newspaper/magazine or radio station; bring 2 copies of the article you found to share with the group. If doing a radio news story, try and find the online link to share to the group.
Journalism	3	Bring printout copies of your written work. A laptop is optional if you like to do edits as you go. Complete one of the following 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d and bring 3 copies with you.
Journalism	4	Attend a public event and do ONE of the following: (a) Write two articles about the event, one using the inverted pyramid style and one using the chronological style. (b) Using a radio, television, or podcasting style, write a news story, a feature story, and a critical review of the event. (c) Take a series of photographs to help tell the story of the event in pictures. Include news photos and feature photos in your presentation. Write a brief synopsis of the event as well as captions for your photos.
Journalism	5	Complete all.
Personal Management	1	Do the following: (a) Choose an item that your family might want to purchase that is considered a major expense. (b) Write a plan that tells how your family would save money for the purchase identified in requirement 1(a). (1) Discuss the plan with your counselor. (2) Discuss the plan with your family. (3) Discuss how other family needs must be considered in this plan. (c) Develop a written shopping strategy for the purchase identified in requirement 1(a). (1) Determine the quality of the item or service (using consumer publications or rating systems.) (2) Comparison shop for the item. Find out where you can buy the item for the best price. (Provide prices from at least two different price sources.) Call around; study ads. Look for a sale or discount coupon. Consider alternatives. Can you buy the item used? Should you wait for a sale?

Merit Badge	Pre-Req	Comments
Personal Management	2	Do the following: (a) Prepare a budget reflecting your expected income (allowance, gifts, wages), expenses, and savings for a period of 13 consecutive weeks. (b) Compare expected income with expected expenses. (1) If expenses exceed budget income, determine steps to balance your budget. (2) If income exceeds budget expenses, state how you would use the excess money (new goal, savings). (c) Track and record your actual income, expenses, and savings for 13 consecutive weeks (the same 13-week period for which you budgeted). (You may use the forms provided in the Personal Management merit badge pamphlet, devise your own, or use a computer-generated version). When complete, present the records showing the results to your counselor. (d) Compare your budget with your actual income and expenses to understand when your budget worked and when it did not work. With your counselor, discuss what you might do differently the next time.
Personal Management	8	Demonstrate to your counselor your understanding of time management by doing the following: (a) Write a "to do" list of tasks or activities, such as homework assignments, chores, and personal projects, that must be done in the coming week. List these in order of importance to you. (b) Make a seven-day calendar or schedule. Put in your set activities, such as school classes, sports practices or games, jobs or chores, and/or Scout or place of worship or club meetings, then plan when you will do all the tasks from your "to do" list between your set activities. (c) Follow the one-week schedule you planned. Keep a daily diary or journal during each of the seven days of this week's activities, writing down when you completed each of the tasks on your "to do" list compared to when you scheduled them. (d) With your counselor, review your "to do" list, one-week schedule, and diary/journal to understand when your schedule worked and when it did not work. Discuss what you might do differently the next time.
Personal Management	9	Prepare a written project plan demonstrating the steps below, including the desired outcome. This is a project on paper, not a real-life project. Examples could include planning a camping trip, developing a community service project or a school or religious event, or creating an annual patrol plan with additional activities not already included in the troop annual plan. Discuss your completed project plan with your counselor. (a) Define the project. What is your goal? (b) Develop a timeline for your project that shows the steps you must take from beginning to completion. (c) Describe your project. (d) Develop a list of resources. Identify how these resources will help you achieve your goal. (e) Develop a budget for your project.
Personal Management	10	Do the following: (a) Choose a career you might want to enter after high school or college graduation. Discuss with your counselor the needed qualifications, education, skills, and experience. (b) Explain to your counselor what the associated costs might be to pursue this career, such as tuition, school or training supplies, and room and board. Explain how you could prepare for these costs and how you might make up for any shortfall.
Salesmanship	5	Do Some Actual Selling.
Salesmanship	6	Interview a Salesperson or Retail Store Owner.
Salesmanship	7	Career Preparation.

Merit Badge	Pre-Req	Comments
Scouting Heritage	2	Do the following: (a) Give a short biographical summary of any TWO of the following, and tell of their roles in how Scouting developed and grew in the United States. (1) Daniel Carter Beard (2) William D. Boyce (3) Waite Phillips (4) Ernest Thompson Seton (5) James E. West (6) "Green Bar Bill" Hillcourt (7) Frederick Russell Burnham (8) Dr. Charles Eastman (9) Edgar Robinson (b) Discuss the significance to Scouting of any TWO of the following: (1) Brownsea Island (2) The First World Scout Jamboree (3) Scouts BSA Handbook (4) Scout Life magazine (formerly Boys' Life)
Scouting Heritage	5	Research the history of your unit, council, summer camp, or Order of the Arrow lodge. With the permission of a parent or guardian, your research methods may include an internet or library search, interviews with Scout leaders, or visits to locations where you learn about your topic. Prepare an oral or written report, a presentation, or a video of your research and review it with your counselor.
Scouting Heritage	8	Interview at least three people (different from those you interviewed for requirement 5) over the age of 40 who were Scouts. Find out about their Scouting experiences. Ask about the impact that Scouting has had on their lives. Share what you learned with your counselor.
Signs, Signals & Codes	NONE	
Sustainability	NONE	Full day with a break for lunch.
Traffic Safety	NONE	Bring a notebook and pen/pencil.
Truck Transportation	NONE	
Veterinary Medicine	NONE	
Weather	NONE	Bring: Notebook paper, pen or pencil, folder or 1/2-inch binder, water bottle. NO laptops, notebooks, computers of any kind.

Other Activities

Adult trainings will be available for interested leaders and parents. These will include in person and computer-lab opportunities; see below for offerings.

- CPR/AED
- A computer lab will be available for Scouters to complete any training that is available online.

Cancellation

This event is "rain or shine" and will only be canceled in the event of unsafe conditions as a result of severe weather. Cancellation and refunds will follow the Virginia Headwaters Council policies. Notifications related to cancelations will be made via email.

Mountain Valley District

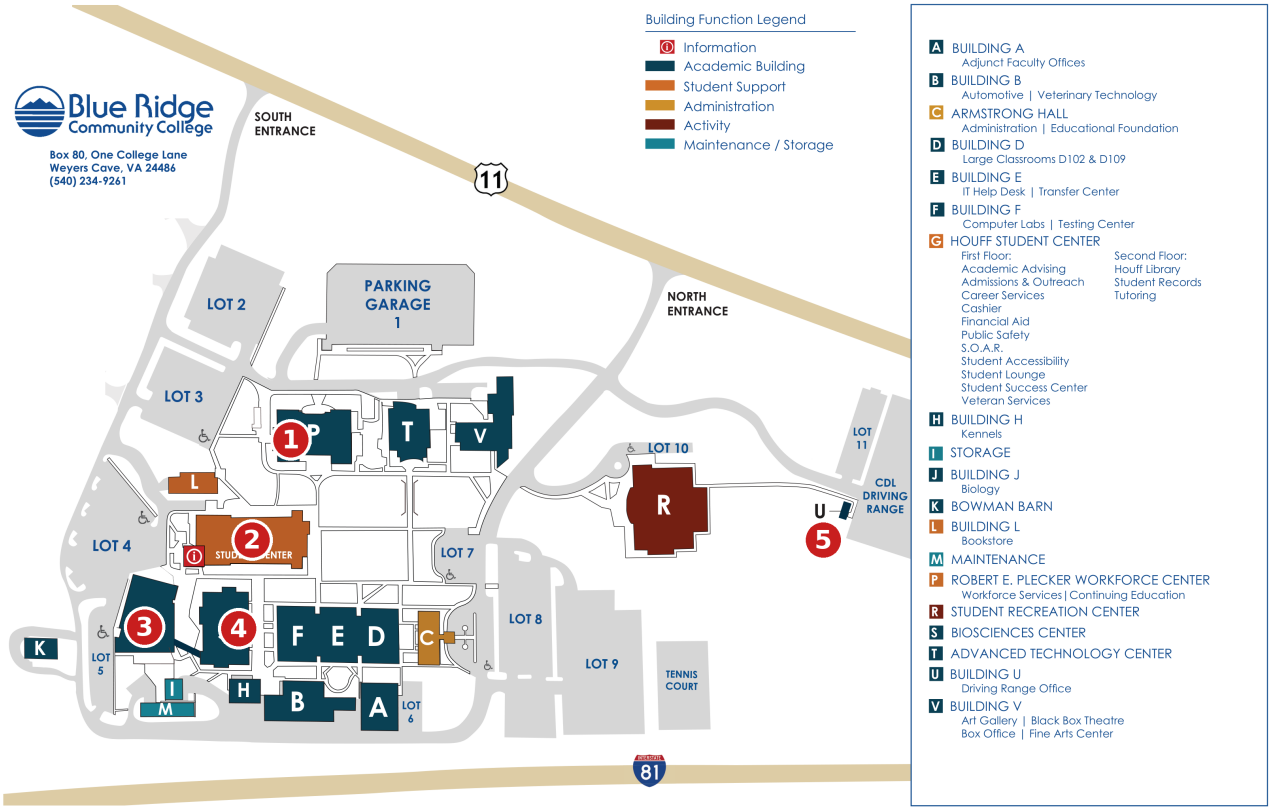
This event is organized by the Mountain Valley District of the Virginia Headwaters Council. The Mountain Valley District serves youth across a broad and vibrant region, including the cities of Buena Vista, Covington, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Staunton, and Waynesboro, as well as the counties of Alleghany, Augusta, Bath, Highland, Pendleton (WV), Rockbridge, and Rockingham.

Point of Contact

Kent Baisley
baisleykp@gmail.com
910-381-1876

Campus Map & Key Locations

Blue Ridge Community College · One College Lane, Weyers Cave, VA 24486 · Saturday, November 21, 2026



1 = Plecker Workforce Center (Check-in, Opening, Communication) · 2 = Houff Student Center (Lunch + G classrooms) · 3 = Biosciences Center (S classrooms) · 4 = Building J (Biology) · 5 = Building U / CDL Driving Range (Truck Transportation). Parking: Garage 1 & Lots 2–3 near check-in; Lot 4 near Houff/S/J.

MBU Room Directory · Saturday, November 21, 2026

Day Flow

Time	Activity	Location
8:00 – 8:45 AM	Check-in / Sign-in	Atrium, Robert E. Plecker Workforce Center (Building P)
8:45 – 9:15 AM	Opening Ceremony	Plecker Auditorium
9:15 AM – 12:00 PM	Morning classes	See room directory
12:00 – 1:30 PM	Lunch	Houff Student Center (Building G)
1:30 – 4:30 PM	Afternoon classes	See room directory

Building Key (room letter = building)

G = Houff Student Center · S = Biosciences Center · J = Building J (Biology) · P = Plecker Workforce Center · U = Building U

Morning Classes — 9:15 AM – 12:00 PM

Class	Room	Instructor
Entrepreneurship & Salesmanship	G217	Larry Rodriguez
American Heritage *	G203	Joe Hoeing
Art	G189	Amanda Dollar
Automotive Maintenance *	G188	Sam King
Chess	S119	John Blair
Citizenship in the Nation	S212	Jaime Penney
Citizenship in the World	S109	Kent Baisley
Communication *	P100	Kent Baisley
Crime Prevention	G215	Cody Glick
Digital Technology *	S116	Jonelle Kinback
Emergency Preparedness *	G224	Lawrence Whitehurst
Fingerprinting	G285	Jeremiah Nugent
Genealogy	G303	John Arpin
Graphic Arts *	J126	Brian Dibb
Journalism	G282	Margi Roache
Personal Management	G284	Lewis Kingston
Scouting Heritage	J101	Ed Palmer
Signs, Signals & Codes	G186	Ronnie Sweet
Sustainability *	S210	Jeff Boutet
Traffic Safety	S117	Adam Campbell
Truck Transportation	Bldg U	Kent Baisley
Veterinary Medicine	J130	Tracy Norman

Class	Room	Instructor
Weather *	J127	Bonnie Dawson

Afternoon Classes — 1:30 – 4:30 PM

Class	Room	Instructor
American Business	G217	Larry Rodriguez
American Heritage *	G203	Joe Hoeing
Automotive Maintenance *	G188	Sam King
Chess	S119	John Blair
Citizenship in the Community	S212	Jaime Penney
Communication *	P100	Kent Baisley
Digital Technology *	S116	Jonelle Kinback
Emergency Preparedness *	G224	Lawrence Whitehurst
Fingerprinting	G285	Jeremiah Nugent
Graphic Arts *	J126	Brian Dibb
Personal Management	G284	Lewis Kingston
Signs, Signals & Codes	G186	Ronnie Sweet
Sustainability *	S210	Jeff Boutet
Traffic Safety	S117	Adam Campbell
Weather *	J127	Bonnie Dawson

* = all-day class, same room in the afternoon.

Parking & Arrival

Parking: Garage 1 & Lots 2–3 near check-in; Lot 4 near Houff / Biosciences / Building J. Campus entrances are off US Route 11 (North and South Entrance); I-81 borders the south side of campus.