BCCC Graduation 2013 is historic

Graduation 2013 was historic for Beaufort County Community College in two ways: The community college graduated its largest class in its history and that class included the first graduates from the college-based Beaufort Early College High School.

In the words of Dr. Scott Rails, president of the N.C. Community College System, the 272 graduates who were awarded degrees, diplomas and certificates represented grit and determination.

"Grit is sustained passion," he said to an estimated 1,200 people in the standing-room only auditorium at Washington High School. "It is perseverance in the face of obstacle. It is a deliberate focus to overcome one's weaknesses and a willingness to make oneself consistently uncomfortable in doing so.

"The blessings that many of us have today are the result of grit interfacing with opportunity at some point along the line - the American dream," he said.

"Folks who question the American Dream don't have the fortunate vantage point I have right now, this evening," he said. "They won't be able to see George Burgess display the spirit of the American Dream when he walks across the stage in just a few minutes to accept his college degree, a relatively short walk for him compared to the seven mile walk he made to school each day after his car broke down.

"Nor will they see the grit of Minnie Hortelano who tonight will graduate with her Human Services Technology degree after having been laid off from the paper mill job of 24 years, or the dedication of the five graduating Hyde County Early College students who rode a school bus 2 1/2 hours each day to have the opportunity to be here.

"Now all of that is true grit, something this place is full of tonight," he said.

BCCC President Barbara Tansey said it was exciting to see the graduates getting their degrees.