



**Contact:** Brian Bolyard, Chief Marketing Officer

[brian.bolyard@bridgevalley.edu](mailto:brian.bolyard@bridgevalley.edu)

Office: (304) 205-6767

Mobile: (304) 516-3296

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**BridgeValley Community and Technical held its Third Commencement Ceremony on May 6<sup>th</sup> at the Charleston Civic Center**

**South Charleston, W. Va.—** BridgeValley Community and Technical College hosted the college's third commencement exercises Friday, May 6<sup>th</sup>. The ceremony featured remarks from BridgeValley's retiring president Dr. Jo Harris. Harris announced her retirement effective July 2016 after serving as a college president for 12 years.

"This graduating class is an example of the great returns West Virginia receives from investments in community and technical college education," said Harris. "After the ceremony, over three hundred individuals now have the opportunity to enter the workforce to create a better future for themselves and for our State."

This year's graduating class reflects the changing demographics of college students today. The ages of the BridgeValley Class of 2016 range from 18 to 60 years old with an average age of 30. The majority of graduates reside in West Virginia with 308 class members coming from 24 counties across the state; five from western Ohio and one from Virginia. Forty-eight percent of this year's graduating class were male; 52%female.

"These statistics reflect that BridgeValley is meeting the mission of community and technical colleges, focusing its programming on local, regional, and state workforce needs and transfer education for first-generation, unemployed, and underemployed residents through affordable, accessible education," said Harris.

Susan Braley, a Nursing graduate from Charleston, WV, was named this year's recipient of the James L. Skidmore Service Award, which recognizes academic excellence and hours of service to the college, the community, or his or her profession while pursuing a degree.

Diana Combs was this year's Jo Harris Presidential Leadership Award winner, which honors a student who not only has achieved academic excellence but also has demonstrated extensive leadership and involvement with campus and community activities.

###