

The Courier News

75¢

Wednesday, September 27, 2017

W.B. McCall's newspaper of choice in Clinton, Tennessee • Volume 131 Issue 7

Read, have fun, and get prizes: Engineering better readers

Heather Miller
hmiller@mycouriernews.com

Engineering Better Readers, Briceville Elementary School's reading initiative that incentivizes elementary school students to read more books, was launched on Wednesday last week to give students a jump start on earning more prizes this year than previous years, said Barry Thacker, GeoEnvironmental

Associates Engineering firm president and founder of Coal Creek Watershed Foundation, the organization that has sponsored the program since its inception at Briceville. "The earlier kick-off date gives students more time to read more books and to win more prizes. We have more prizes this year than we did last year," Thacker said.

Instead of kicking off the

program mid-way through the school year, students will have the opportunity this year to enjoy the program the entire school year, he said.

Prizes include Xboxes, Wiis, iPods, iPads, Playstation 4s, and other electronic devices; toys and games, sports equipment, and many other items.

Engineering Better Readers encourages children to read books for points. The more points they earn by reading, the more points they can use to "purchase" prizes.

This year makes the program's fourth launch.

Attending this year's kick-off was Anderson County Mayor Frank. Frank talked to students about the importance of reading, and encouraged them to read often, whether it is for entertainment, or informational purposes.

"Reading is lots of learning and fun. It gives you something you can do that you enjoy doing," stated Melissa Fleming, First grade teacher



Barry Thacker (with hat) answers questions for Briceville students.

at Briceville, to students following Frank's talk.

"We just had a book fair where many of you bought books, so you have a chance to earn lots of prizes from all the reading you're going to be

doing, and where do you think those prizes are?" Fleming asked the students.

"They're BEHIND THE CURTAIN!!!" pointed a know-

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Briceville students finally get a glimpse at some of the prizes that will be available. — Photos by Heather Miller

Read

from 1A

"They're BEHIND THE CURTAIN!!!" pointed a knowing first grader in the front row.

"Yes, that's right Jason, they're behind the curtain! In a moment you all will have a chance to walk across the stage to look at the prizes," said Fleming.

dents had been waiting to see.

Prizes. Prizes.

And more prizes.

A mountain of prizes.

The room that was filled with silence seconds before erupted into screams of excitement from eager students. BES teachers say the program has been effective in increasing student participation in reading in that they have reported seeing more students

year thing this year," Thacker said.

Thacker, who usually dresses as a historical figure of some kind for the kick-off events with the intent of segueing into an entertaining story of the past to pique students' interest, appeared to students in character this year as John Crockett, the father of legendary David Crockett.