

WAGE™ Receives \$15,000 Initiative

Albermarle Corporation and Evonik Foams are two of Magnolia's largest employers, and many of their employees are familiar with the Magnolia-Columbia County Adult Education Center because of the WAGE Certification the companies require possible employees to complete before employment.

WAGE, or Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy, allows employers to pre-test for skills that prove necessary in today's workforce. The Adult Education Center helps make that possible, and with a new \$15,000 initiative from Albermarle, the center can continue providing a service that helps to keep employees in Columbia County.

Diane Cary, director, said funding is sometimes hard to find. "Money was really, really tight," she said, "We haven't had an increase in funding since 1992." Because of the donation, the center now has the funding to hire a new part-time employee to aid with test prep so the center can place its WAGE instructor in a full-time position.

--Banner-News (Magnolia)



Above (l-r): Ralph Edds, WAGE Program; Diane Cary, Magnolia Adult Education; Governor Mike Beebe, and Celia McQuinston, Albermarle.



The Department of Career Education funds the Adult Education Division. The Adult Education Division provides programs and services statewide.



Governor Mike Beebe with Adult Education administrators and Arkansas Department of Career Education staff members.

Governor Proclaims Adult Education Week

Governor Mike Beebe presented a proclamation declaring September 13-17 as Adult Education Week in Arkansas and September 15 as General Educational Development (GED®) Pride Day. The presentation was held September 16 in the Governor's Conference Room at the State Capitol.

"It is timely and appropriate that attention be focused on the special efforts and dedication of Arkansas's adult educators who prepare individuals for productive employment and enriched lives," Governor Beebe's proclamation read. "I encourage my fellow citizens to become familiar with the services and benefits offered by adult education courses and to support and participate in these programs."

The purpose of adult education is to assist adults to become literate, obtain knowledge and skills for employment and self-sufficiency, obtain the educational skills necessary to become full partners in their children's educational development, and complete their secondary school education.

Adult education services provide academic skills instruction and GED preparation for adults who lack a high school diploma. English as a Second Language (ESL) and English Literacy/Civics Education serve adults who want to become more fluent in English, pass U.S. citizenship tests, and acquire basic employability skills. Additionally, workplace classes are offered onsite at businesses so current and prospective employees can improve their basic reading, math, team-building, and communication skills – as well as their GED readiness. The Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE™) program provides academic and employability instruction to meet the needs of unemployed and underemployed individuals.

The Adult Education Division of the Arkansas Department of Career Education funds and oversees 51 adult education programs and 20 literacy councils. Twenty-four adult education programs are administered by public school systems and 27 are administered by postsecondary educational institutions.

"Arkansas's future economic success depends on having a well-educated and well-trained workforce," said Arkansas Department of Career Education Director William L. "Bill" Walker, Jr. "Thanks to the skill and dedication of our Adult Education Division staff and instructors statewide, we have the resources in place to offer a second chance to many Arkansans who didn't finish high school. Through his proclamation, Governor Beebe is once again proving his commitment to education at every level in our state. That commitment virtually guarantees that Arkansans will be prepared for the high-skill, high-demand, high-wage jobs of the 21st century economy."



SPOTLIGHT ON Troy Harris SAU Tech Adult Education Center

Troy Harris took the GED Exam on August 30 and 31, 2010, at the Adult Education Center of

SAU Tech at the Ross Center in Camden. On Saturday, September 11, his mailman delivered the good news. He had passed the test and received his *Arkansas High School Diploma*. Troy had taken the test with five others, but what makes his story unique is that he was born on February 2, 1928, and is 82 years old.

Mr. Harris has lived a varied and successful life, but he says that his haphazard early educational career and his lack of a high school education made it really tough for him. He was the tenth of eleven children and the only one of them to ever receive a diploma. He hopes that his story will be an incentive for young people to be sure to get their education and high school diploma.

Born within a year before the Stock Market Crash of 1929, Troy's challenging boyhood was during the Great Depression of the 1930's. He asked, "Have you seen the movie *The Grapes of Wrath*? That was us." The movie depicted the ordeals of a family that lost its farm in Oklahoma and moved to California to become migrant farm workers.

In his grade school years he enrolled in different schools two or three times per year and in different states. He recalls 7th and 8th grades being difficult because he had missed many fundamentals along the way. Finally he quit school altogether and worked as a migrant farm worker through World War II. In his lifetime Harris has served in the military, been a licensed painter, a realtor and general building contractor. He also became a Baptist minister.

Harris said, "What's important is to inspire young people to get their education." His step-grandson earned his GED in Camden and encouraged Troy to get his. That's what brought him to the Adult Education Center of SAU Tech. It was there that he got help in refining his mathematics and writing skills. Troy Harris now has the high school diploma that eluded him so many years ago.



SAU Tech Adult Education Center Celebrates GED. Pride Day

The Adult Education Center in Camden observed GED Pride Day on September 16.

The day of activities began with an information session for students hosted in conjunction with local partner agencies (TRIO, WIA, CADC, and SAU Technical College). The celebration continued with a Balloon Lift Off which was followed by a student appreciation luncheon. All of this was done with the participation of the adult education center staff and students.

ADMINISTRATORS' MEETING

Adult Education center administrators and Literacy Council coordinators met on September 16-17 at the Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center in Little Rock. New administrators met on September 15th.

The session centered on updating and informing the group on a variety of issues related to optimizing performance at the local level. State staff members shared direction, clarification and insight for adherence to policy.

One of the meeting highlights was a chance for participants to learn about and see a new component of the Adult Education marketing campaign. This fall 20 centers will be visited on a statewide tour. In addition, several live/remote broadcasts will be aired on radio increasing awareness of opportunities offered by Adult Education.



Administrators check out the 23-foot Adult Education "Learn More. Earn More." Tour Bus.

