



the Workforce Counselor

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501-682-1500 * <http://dwe.arkansas.gov>



Budding Biofuel Industry Target of New Start-Up Grants



Through its own New Program Start-up Grants and federal Perkins, *the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education (DWE) is working with local, state and education leaders to help spur economic development and the creation of business and industry in the state.* The DWE fin-

gerprint can most-recently be seen on Arkansas's burgeoning biofuel industry and its faltering manufacturing industry.

Roughly three years ago, representatives from three east Arkansas post-secondary schools calling themselves the "**Delta Tech Consortium**" were looking for a way to attract new business and industry to the Blytheville, Forrest City and West Memphis areas. They came to DWE for help.

DWE Division of Career and Technical Education Deputy Director John Davidson says the group was unsure which direction to take or which industries to pursue. However, they did have sharply-focused plans, well-defined high school

frameworks in-hand and news that their manufacturing courses were ready to be taught at colleges and high schools in the cities of interest. Davidson encouraged them to apply for a New Program Start-up Grant.

When the application was returned, Davidson and other DWE staffers who graded it found it worthy and awarded the project \$20,000.

The following year, the Consortium was even more focused and its plans were even more concentrated. The group had now determined the Delta's future lay in biofuels, and was seeking further assistance from DWE. Another New Program Start-up Grant application for new equipment was filed, and it was

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Cisco Networking Academy presents Award to Department

The Arkansas Department of Workforce Education (DWE) received The Partnership Award from Cisco Networking Academy during Cisco's Academy Conference held July 28-30 in Little Rock. The Partnership Award is given in recognition and appreciation for the 10 years that DWE has worked in the Cisco Networking Academy.

"We are basically using the Cisco Academy model for a portion of our Computer Engineering Programs," said Dick Burchett, DWE Program Manager for Skilled and Technical Sciences. "They have provided many Arkansas schools with the curriculum and training for instructors."

Established in 1997, the Cisco Networking Academy teaches students networking and other information technology-related skills, preparing them for the workforce and for higher education studies in engineering, computer science and other related fields. Since its launch, the Cisco Networking Academy program has grown to more than 10,000 academies across the U.S. and more than 150 countries with a curriculum taught in nine different languages. More than 400,000 students participate in academies operating in high schools, colleges and universities, technical schools, community-based organizations and other educational programs. The Networking Academy program blends face-to-face teaching with web-based curriculum, hands-on lab exercises and Internet-based assessment.

"The Cisco Networking Academy and its portfolio of 18 courses will help meet the diverse needs of students with different interests and objectives," said DWE Director William L. "Bill" Walker, Jr. "These courses encourage the practical application of knowledge through hands-on activities and prepare students for career opportunities, continuing education and globally-recognized certifications."



Director Walker with Amy Christen, Vice President of Corporate Affairs for Cisco



Director's Update

William L. "Bill" Walker, Jr.

Director

Arkansas Department of Workforce Education

The workplace of the future demands workers who are well educated and highly skilled. As we move through the 21st century, Arkansans' standards of living will depend largely on our ability to provide workers for high skill, high wage, and high demand careers.

The recent economic downturn throughout the nation, and in some instances throughout the world, is a testament for us all to realize that we are truly in a global economy. What affects people around the nation and around the world, affects us here in Arkansas as well. For us to truly succeed in this global economy, we must embrace Governor Mike Beebe's message that economic development and education go hand in hand.

Recently, our agency awarded start up grants in the biofuel industry. This is a budding industry in our state that we are happy to support. This will help create new jobs in the Delta area of our state and we are happy to be proactive in trying to meet the needs of this burgeoning industry.

Opportunities to prepare and train the future workforce

to be the best and brightest are vitally important in strenuous economic times such as these. The Department of Workforce Education stands ready and is doing our part to remain ambitious to educate all Arkansans for the demands of the high performance workplace. Each of the three major divisions – Career and Technical Education, Adult Education, and Arkansas Rehabilitation Services – has developed a coordinated set of initiatives that we believe will lead to a strong and confident workforce able to compete in the global economy.

Our agency is committed to providing a comprehensive and flexible system of lifelong learning opportunities to the citizens of Arkansas. We are committed to providing our citizens the opportunities they deserve and business and industry the workers they need. Governor Beebe has set forth the vision for our state, and our agency will promote every avenue and opportunity to achieve this vision. The time has come to commit to building a stronger Arkansas that is prepared to compete in the global economy.

WE ARKANSAS
Department of
WORKFORCE
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Focus on Martha Dixon

Member, State Board of Workforce Education and Career Opportunities



Dixon

State Board of Workforce Education and Career Opportunities Board member Martha Dixon knows firsthand what it takes to be successful in today's small business world. She owns three businesses in her hometown of Arkadelphia and hopes her knowledge and experience will help her make

the kinds of decisions that will benefit the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education (DWE).

"I think my business background is one reason why I was chosen to serve on this board," Dixon said. "There are a lot of people who are not going to college who need the skills it takes to open their own business or get a good job. I don't think a lot of people realize how important this agency is."

Dixon attended Henderson State University and received a degree in fashion and design from Commercial Technical Institute in Little Falls, New Jersey. She owns and operates Martha's Fashion and Design, Dixon Manufacturing, Inc., and Martha's Kids in Arkadelphia. She is also involved with several civic and charitable organizations that include the Arkadelphia Chamber of Commerce, Baptist Medical Center of Arkadelphia, the Arkadelphia Rotary Club, the Arkansas Leadership Forum, the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation and the Shadow Program.

While Dixon has just started her second year as a member of the board, it didn't take her long to realize the positive direction the agency is taking under DWE Director William L. "Bill" Walker, Jr.'s authority.

"I served on this board before when it was a part of the Department of Education," she said. "This board and everything this agency does is a vital supplement to the education system. From vo-tech schools to high schools and colleges, it's a very important component and something I take seriously."

ACTI Happenings

ACTI holds 172nd Commencement Ceremony

The 172nd Commencement Service at the Department of Workforce Education's Division of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services' Arkansas Career Training Institute (ACTI) in Hot Springs was an emotional roller coaster.

The 68 students from 40 different cities graduating during the August 29 event made up what ACTI Administrator Barbara McBeth-Lewis called "the largest graduating class in recent memory." Lewis' remarks became evident as it appeared the stage in the auditorium would not be large enough to hold all of the grads as they entered to begin the ceremony.

To be such a joyous occasion, the event was marked with an air of tragic sadness, and it showed on the faces of all of the black-robed students. Attendees paused at the beginning to remember long-time offset printing instructor Chris Giles who passed away the previous week at the age of 51. Dr. Mel Wilson, ACTI Chaplain, reminded the staff, students and visitors that Giles would have been overjoyed to see another class graduate from ACTI and would have watched from his usual seat in the back, left-hand corner of the auditorium. Tragically, graduation day was supposed to have been Giles' final day on the job before retiring after 30 years of service.

The mood lightened and became more celebratory as Department of Workforce Education (DWE) Deputy Director of Adult Education Jim Smith delivered his keynote address. Smith congratulated the graduates on their hard work, but advised them to persevere through life.

"You're not at the end of the road," Smith said. "You've just begun. You chose a career. You're now the people who make the world go around, but it doesn't stop now."

With that, Smith encouraged the graduates to not only move forward

with their careers, but with their educations.

"Every person in this class came to a gate in their lives that could have prevented them from moving forward," said Smith. "They each chose to come to [ACTI] so they could open that gate and go through it. I now encourage you to move forward



Jim Smith

even more with higher education. Get an Associate's degree or a Bachelor's degree. Education is a thing that – if you have it and need it, you can always use it whenever you want it. If you don't have it, you're lost."

The ceremony became increasingly jubilant as the graduates received their graduation certificates. Not only were the students handed their sheepskins, but they also got a few greenbacks to help them get started.

The Hot Springs Rehabilitation Volunteers, Inc. awarded each graduate a \$50 bonus along with an additional \$50 bonus to each of the 28 graduates who had already found a job. Volunteers President Jo West Taylor said the group passed out \$4,800 in bonuses to ACTI graduates, but that's not where the cash awards

HAPPENINGS continued on page 5



-- photo courtesy of Bobby Jines

Associate Director Albert accepts Rehabilitation Services Administration position in Washington, D.C.

Roy Albert, Associate Director of the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education's Division of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services' Program, Planning, Development & Evaluation (PPD&E) department and a member of the Department of Workforce Education's Senior Management Team, retired August 29 to accept the position of Deputy Director of the Federal Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) in Washington, D.C. RSA is a Department of Disability Services (DDS) program that oversees grants that help individuals with physical or mental disabilities to obtain employment and live more independently through counseling, medical and psychological services, job training and other individualized services.

DDS Director Judith E. Heumann calls Albert a leader with
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Albert (right) receives congratulations on his new assignment from Division of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services Chief of Field Services Ken Musteen.

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stopped. As an added surprise, ACTI Recreation Section Supervisor Billy Robinson announced that each graduate would receive another \$100 courtesy of the recreation section.

The 172nd ACTI Commencement Service was different from most. From sorrow to joy to hope, the event ran the gamut of emotions. With 68 graduates, the ceremony was the largest anyone could remember. It was certainly the most lucrative graduation ever held on campus with more than \$10,000 paid out to the graduates. But for all of its differences, this service had one thing in common with the 171 services that came before it. Each and every student who graduated from the Arkansas Career Training Institute had been trained by the best instructors available and now possessed a marketable set of skills that would allow them to find a job they could be proud of and earn a good living in their chosen career field regardless of their disability.

The following is a list of the students who received certificates and their areas of study:

Auto Collision Repair

Cortez Roy - *Little Rock*

Automotive Maintenance Technology

Percy Alford - *Strong*; Deundre Gill - *Eudora*; Jimmy Lamb - *Lonoke*;

Jonathan Williams - *Grady*;
Thomas Whatley - *El Dorado*

Auto Partsman

Jim Sanders - *Hot Springs*

Business Education

Deborah Charles - *Dumus*;
Alexandra Haines - *El Dorado*;
Earline Hicks - *White Hall*;
Kimberley Marley - *Mabelvale*;
James Robinson - *Arkadelphia*;
Tasmine Wehunt - *Mt. Pine*

Certified Nursing Assistant

Becky Bair (PETRA) - *Hot Springs*;
John Abernathy (PETRA) - *Rogers*;
Kandice Green (PETRA) - *Mineral Springs*;
Nathan Munnerlyn - *Batesville*;
Wanda Oates - *Hot Springs*;
Jonathan Olmstead (PETRA) - *Judsonia*;
Everett O'Neal - *Dewitt*;
Tom Rayder (PETRA) - *Lake Village*;
Shanquita Taylor - *Dumas*;
Trista Walker (PETRA) - *Cave City*

Construction Technology

Seth Balloun - *Dardanelle*;
Sarah Crain - *Beebe*;
Kevin Green - *Helena*;
Doyle Hill - *Little Rock*;
Tim Maxie - *Magnolia*;
Darrell Taylor - *Sparkman*

Cosmetology

Jessica Berry - *Bearden*;
Ashli Cook - *Crossett*;
Kia Crochran - *San Antonio, TX*;
La'Tara Dawn - *Bearden*;
Kealey Elmore - *Hot Springs*;
Freya Ferrell - *Hot*

Springs;
Sherry Kidd - *Hot Springs*;
Amanda Meinzer - *Calico Rock*;
Robin Robertson - *Gurdon*;
Rhonda Young - *Rison*

Environmental Systems Services

Paula Smith - *Hot Springs*

Food Service

Francis Brown - *Fort Smith*;
Pam Hensley - *Benton*;
Marcus Johnson - *Dermott*;
Shauna King - *Little Rock*;
Mark McGiboney - *Garfield*;
Lisa Moody - *Judsonia*;
Keith Penny - *Hot Springs*;
Hazel Smith - *Little Rock*;
David York - *Rison*

Laundry

Jennifer Brown - *West Memphis*;
Sheena Davis - *Magnolia*;
Charles Nash - *Smackover*;
Antoinette Nelson - *West Memphis*

Non-Traditional

Eddy Smith - *Hot Springs*

Printing

Bobbie Black - *Hoxie*;
Jesse Johnson - *North Little Rock*;
Mark Nolen Mahoney - *Rogers*;
Joshua Milton Neal - *Crossett*;
Clifton Pearce - *Hot Springs*

Small Engines

Aubrey Canterbury - *Hot Springs*;
Alex P. McBride - *Fort Smith*;
Charles McBride - *Fort Smith*;
Michael B. Williams - *North Little Rock*;
Clement L. Willis - *Hughes*

Welding

Brandon Garner - *Thornton*



What You Should Know

Rehabilitation Initial Diagnosis and Assessment for Clients (RIDAC)

Nicholaus Paal, Ph.D. *Program Manager/Psychologist*

Rehabilitation Initial Diagnosis and Assessment for Clients (RIDAC) is a diagnostic screening and assessment program available to persons who have applied for services from Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS), often to establish eligibility.

Evaluation through RIDAC is initiated by a counselor who may require more information regarding an applicant's eligibility; intellectual, educational, mental health or physical limitations; vocational interest patterns; the feasibility of the desired educational/training program; or the possible need for more in-depth evaluation. Although referrals from other counselors typically come prior to the establishment of eligibility, those referrals can be made at any time the counselor has a question about an existing client's abilities, limitations or vocational goals. Obtaining mental health or school records can result in a more precise diagnosis than a screening evaluation alone and may provide enough diagnostic information eliminating the need for a screening evaluation.

Applicants are initially evaluated in a group setting (usually with eight to 12 applicants depending on the physical limitations of the evaluation location) for the basic screening evaluation. Further individualized evaluations, including vocational interest inventories, are conducted by staff members as needed or requested. All applicants undergo an individual interview after the testing is completed. These interviews may include a mental health assessment. A medical screening evaluation or a review of a client's medical records can be conducted by a RIDAC physician. The majority of these evaluations consist of the above procedures only. Applicants who present a more complex picture, therefore a recommendation may be made to the counselor for

a more in-depth evaluation to be conducted by RIDAC or Learning and Evaluation Center (LEC). Special arrangements may be required for applicants who have more serious medical, intellectual or sensory problems. Such arrangements are provided by counselors and RIDAC staff.

Results of the evaluations are provided to counselors, typically in fewer than 10 days after the evaluation date. These reports generally describe strengths and weaknesses (areas of ability and functional limitations), vocational limitations, as well as applicable mental health, educational and medical diagnoses. In cases where more comprehensive evaluations are required, the reports tend to cover more areas of ability and limitation.

RIDAC staff is comprised of eight psychological examiners, two physicians, one psychologist, one program manager/psychologist and one administrative assistant. These staff members are located in six different sites in central and northwest Arkansas. They also travel to 28 field locations throughout the state on a regularly scheduled basis, and occasionally by special request, to conduct evaluations. A number of staff members review records for locations when it is not feasible to travel in order to help counselors determine client eligibility and the most appropriate programming.

For more information, contact

RIDAC

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FFA students out in full force during state fair

The Arkansas Department of Workforce Education's **Agricultural Science and Technology** department had a busy week October 10-19 as they helped manage the Arkansas State Fair's Livestock Show.



In addition to Arkansas's FFA participating in the livestock contests, state FFA staff and instructors held an agricultural exhibit, which included live animals on display for fair-goers to enjoy.

"We have an agricultural literacy problem in this country. More and more people are losing what used to be common knowledge about the farm community," said Department of Workforce Education (DWE) Public School Program Advisor Bruce Lazarus. "Many people don't appreciate where milk and eggs come from. What we put on at the State Fair is a good educational system where people of all ages can come to see different forms livestock and learn a little bit more about agriculture in Arkansas."

A wealth of farm animals were on display during the week, including goats, sheep, pigs and cattle.

"There were incubators where people could see chicks hatch out of eggs," Lazarus said. "It's a very popular part of the fair. When it's school day at the fair, thousands of kids come through. They love to see the chicks hatch."

Lazarus said local FFA programs statewide are assigned times to care for and manage the exhibits.

"We also have agriculture teachers who help operate and manage the actual livestock show and help make sure it's run properly," he said. "We always look forward to this and plan for it for the whole year."

Save the Date!

December 11, 2008

DWE/ARS staff: We will see you at our next Joint Staff Meeting at the Clear Channel Metroplex in Little Rock at 10:30 a.m. Come ready for a good time, good company and good food.

Skilled and Technical Sciences In-Service at National Park Community College



Nearly 250 Skilled and Technical Sciences instructors received a little extra training at the Department of Workforce Education's Skilled and Technical Information Sciences in-service held in August at National Park Community College (NPCC) in Hot Springs.

"Of the 500 or so teachers we serve in Skilled and Technical Sciences, about half were able to attend," said Dick Burchett, Department of Workforce Education Skilled and Technical Sciences Program Manager. "We provide state-sponsored in-service training for as many of our teachers as we can."

These training sessions lasted up to three days and included topics in a wide variety of areas including automotive technology, construction technology, cosmetology, computer engineering, collision repair, health science technology and radio/TV advertising design.

Pictured above: The Electric Vehicle Team – (l-r) Brian Charles, NPCC; Luis Romo, Electric Vehicle Master Programmer; Gwen Wiggins, North Little Rock High School-West; Roy Germain, Mid-South Community College; Mark Huffman, Northwest Technical Institute-Springdale; Linda Powell, Cabot High School; Randy Gullett, Mabelvale Magnet High School.

Janice Hanlon wins national GED award

Her clients, students and colleagues already know that Arkansas Department of Workforce Education (DWE) GED Administrator Janice Hanlon is among the nation's best GED Administrators. Now the rest of the country knows it as well.

Hanlon was selected to receive the 2008 GED Testing Service Distinguished Service Award at the GED Administrators' Conference in Sparks, Nevada, July 15-18. The award is presented annually to a GED Administrator who demonstrates an unwavering commitment to the advancement of his or her GED testing program through relevant initiatives that identify, develop, encourage, advance, link and support GED testing candidates.

Hanlon became GED Testing Administrator for Arkansas in April 2000. Under her leadership the state's program continues to flourish in all areas, but she is quick to admit she can't do the job by herself and that the award isn't hers alone.

"Winning was quite an honor, but it was a team effort," she says. "I never could have done it without [Administrative Assistant] Tambra [Nicholson] and [Secretary] Claritta [Stinson]. Without them, this office couldn't run on a day-to-day basis and we wouldn't be able to provide these necessary services."

Hanlon manages 62 testing centers in Arkansas visiting roughly half of the sites each year to offer test examiners the benefit of a one-on-one exchange of program information. Her style of personal, on-site monitoring – along with



Janice Hanlon (right) accepts award from **Sylvia Robinson**, Executive Director of the GED Testing Service in Washington, D.C.

the desk monitoring and in-service training provided to the examiners – exemplifies simple cause and effect. Hanlon's constant review and guidance toward excellence result in better service and access for Arkansas's GED candidates.

"Janice uses common-sense principles and straight-forward techniques combined with innovative projects and initiatives to achieve extraordinary results," said DWE Deputy Director of Adult Education Jim Smith. "Arkansas has one of the highest GED pass rates in America at roughly 85 percent. That's phenomenal. Janice and her team are largely responsible for that."

Program and project accomplishments are only half the story says DWE Director William L. "Bill" Walker, Jr. According to Walker, the rest of the tale is told through Han-

lon's personality and attitude.

"Janice has the ability to relate to all – regardless of age, race, gender or connection to the program," Walker says. "She is respected by all of the GED examiners in the state. She shows compassion with examinees expressing the worth of their GED credential and by encouraging them to continue their efforts to earn their credential. She is supportive to her staff and cultivates teamwork. Janice manages her work and all aspects of her life with a genuine zeal and concern for doing the right thing. Janice Hanlon is a wonderful blend and example of leadership by strength in heart, head, and hand."

While it may seem that everything about Janice Hanlon, her role as Arkansas's GED

Testing Administrator and her selection as the 2008 recipient of the GED Testing Service Distinguished Service Award have been covered, those who know her well are probably aware she won't be satisfied unless one aspect of the award was highlighted at least one more time.

"In spite of all of the reflection I did during the awards program I'm still at a loss for words," she said. "But if there's one thing everyone needs to know, Tambra and Claritta were very instrumental in [my] getting this award. They are prompt and courteous in providing customer service. I couldn't do my job effectively without Tambra and Claritta working so well beside me. I am honored and proud to have two such top-drawer professionals on my team."

Governor's Commission on People with Disabilities Commissioners Attend Training Session

The Arkansas Department of Workforce Education's (DWE) Division of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services' (ARS) Governor's Commission on People with Disabilities (GCPD) met September 11 at ARS Central Office in Little Rock for a mandatory training session to re-familiarize the GCPD's 15 commissioners with their responsibilities and parliamentary procedure.

GCPD Executive Director Leonard Boyle introduced Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL) Executive Director and long-time advocate for Arkansans with disabilities, Billy Altom, to conduct the session.

Altom explained that non-profit boards have ten responsibilities. Those include:

- ◆ Selecting a short and succinct mission
- ◆ Selecting an executive
- ◆ Supporting the executive and reviewing his/her performance
- ◆ Ensuring effective organizational planning
- ◆ Ensuring adequate resources
- ◆ Managing resources effectively
- ◆ Determining and monitoring the organization's programs and services
- ◆ Enhancing the organization's public image – in effect, board members serve as the organization's ambassadors
- ◆ Serving as a court of appeals
- ◆ Assessing the performance of the organization

Drawing from Robert's Rules of Order, Altom discussed parliamentary regulations for the commission to follow during its monthly meetings. Altom encouraged the Commissioners to remember the importance of "not victimizing the audience or playing victim to those members with individual political or parliamentary agendas." To avoid those possibilities, he suggested



2008 GCPD Commissioners are (front row, l-r): Kareen Cooper, Cleon Green, Sherice Smith, Caroline "Kay" Dunn, Lester Fulmer, and Executive Director Leonard Boyle; (back row, l-r): Christopher "Flint" Fears, William "Bill" Duvall, Mary Bennett, Dr. James Hunt, Sharon Moone-Jochums, Nancy Thompson, Gerald Carr, Martha DeWoody, GCPD Chairperson Maureen Strobel, and Mark Backus.

the following defenses:

- ◆ Writing bylaws with the board and the organization's needs, goals and missions clearly and succinctly listed, defined and addressed
- ◆ Staunchly following agendas to avoid chaos and confusion during meetings or other gatherings.

Governor appoints new members to Commission

The following is a list of Governor Beebe's recent appointments to the Governor's Commission on People with Disabilities and their length of terms.

Christopher "Flint" Fears: June 27, 2008 - June 1, 2011

Kenneth "Bill" Keltner: June 27, 2008 - June 1, 2011

Gerald Carr: July 18, 2008 - June 1, 2011

Dr. James Hunt: June 27, 2008 - June 1, 2011

Dr. Nancy Carlson: June 27, 2008 - June 1, 2011

Nancy Thompson: April 8, 2008 - June 1, 2010

Kareen Cooper: April 8, 2008 - June 1, 2009

Cleon Green: June 27, 2008 - June 1, 2011

Sherice Smith: April 8, 2008 - June 10, 2010

Glenda Hubbard: April 8, 2008 - June 1, 2010

Maureen Strobel: April 9, 2008 - June 1, 2010

Caroline "Kay" Dunn: April 8, 2008 - June 1, 2010

Mary Bennett: April 8, 2008 - June 1, 2010

Martha DeWoody: June 27, 2008 - June 1, 2011

Lester Fulmer: April 8, 2008 - June 1, 2010



Albert is joined by daughter Whitney and wife Ella for the heartfelt send-off.

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integrity, who has developed programs and policies for quality assurance and case review that have been praised and modeled by surrounding states.

“Roy’s retirement is bittersweet,” says Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) Commissioner Robert Treviño. “The sadness of his retirement is overshadowed by our excitement for him in his new role.”

Under his direction, ARS successfully obtained two separate federal grants from RSA totaling \$3.5 million. In both cases, Albert served as grants manager and was responsible for creating the vision for the types of services ARS provided. In addition, Albert helped develop the team that resulted in the creation of a new service delivery program.

Randy Parker, Program Evaluation Specialist for PPD&E, has worked closely with Albert for the past decade. “He is a great supervisor and a great mentor,” Parker says. “Roy is passionate about his work, very knowledgeable, genuinely cares for the agency and is very supportive of his staff. He also has a great sense of humor and loves to laugh. A new challenge is something that Roy relishes. He will be a great asset as director of the D.C. agency.”

DWE Director William L. “Bill” Walker, Jr. says Albert’s impact on the agency will always be felt. “The

Friends, Family and Colleagues attend farewell bash



Transition Counselor Carolyn Turner



PPD&E Special Program Administrator Dale Turrentine



Hot Springs Rehabilitation Center Administrator Barbara Lewis



PPD&E Administrative Assistant Gloria Gill and DWE Director William L. “Bill” Walker, Jr.



Retired VR Counselor Gloria Brown



(above) ARS Purchasing Agent Michelle Washington, center, leads Albert into Central Office’s conference room where a large crowd waits to honor the retiree. (right) Randy Parker, PPD&E Program Evaluation Specialist, shares a laugh with his departing boss. (bottom right) ARS Commissioner Robert Treviño, DWE Executive Assistant Angela Heard and Ken Musteen share stories of their friend with the crowd.



Disability advocate Billy Altom



mark of a truly great public administrator is evidenced by the impact that person makes on an organization and whether they left it better than they found it,” said Walker. “There is no better illustration of that principle than Roy and the contribution he has made to ARS. His leadership will be missed here in Arkansas, but the good citizens of Washington D.C. have much to look forward to and we wish him much success.”



Bloodworth Energized by Pageant Experience

As Arkansas's representative at the Ms. Wheelchair America Pageant, **Ms. Wheelchair Arkansas, Department of Workforce Education's Division of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services' District I-North Secretary Jonna Bloodworth** did the state and the agency proud.

While Jonna didn't come home with the crown from the event held July 21-26 in Rockville, Md., she says it was an amazing experience all around.

"The week was filled with learning, laughter, caring and so much fun," she says. "Twenty-six of us in wheelchairs crossing the street to have lunch and shop was a task in itself. We stopped traffic! The contest was put on with elegance and grace. Getting 26 wheelchairs on one stage was a job and it was done well."

Despite being thrown headfirst in the national spotlight, Jonna said her nerves never played a factor in her performance. She says her week in Maryland with the other contestants was a wonderful, enriching and a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

"This contest made me realize that I do have something to offer. I have a voice for people with disabilities," said Jonna. "Going to Ms. Wheelchair America and seeing all the other contestants advocate for [people with] disabilities has motivated me to get out there and do more."

Providing help to those in the



Bloodworth (front row, left) takes a break with other pageant contestants, including **Michelle Colvard** (front row, right), **Ms. Texas**, who received eventual recognition as **Ms Wheelchair America**

too much time playing video games.

"I have seen more and more people staying home getting hooked on games and not wanting to do anything but play," Jonna said. "If we don't get some help for them, they will be lost. It is just like drugs or anything like that. Gaming destroys families' lives."

Jonna says it doesn't matter that she didn't come home from the Ms. Wheelchair America pageant

with the crown – that honor went to Ms. Texas, Michelle Colvard. She says she's a winner regardless of the outcome

"It was life-changing," Jonna says. "For one, I have 25 more friends that truly care about me. It also made me more confident in myself. All of the contestants are very strong women. We can learn from each other and we'll be friends forever."

disability community is already in Jonna's blood. Jonna, who was crowned Ms. Wheelchair Arkansas in Little Rock Feb. 9, mentioned advocacy for the disabled as a part of her platform during the state contest. She said she would travel Arkansas talking about the disability community. She also discussed plans to start a computer gaming rehab as a means of keeping people with disabilities from spending

Prather chosen to head Veterans Approving Agency

Randy Prather, most recently a Public School Program Advisor for the Department of Workforce Education's Office of Skilled and Technical Sciences, has been named as the head of the Department of Workforce Education's Veterans Approving Agency division.

"I'm excited about my new role in the department," Prather said. "The fact that I am a veteran and have used my educational benefits, I know the importance of the State Approving Agency for veteran's training responsibilities. I'm looking forward to serving our great veterans across the state."



Prather

Dates to Remember

11/12 - 11/13/2008

FCCLA STAR Events

Location: University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff

Contact: Suzanne Jones at 501-682-1115

11/13 - 11/14/2008

Agriculture Teacher Workshop

Location: Arkansas State University -- Beebe

Contact: Kate Messersmith at 501-682-2561

National FCCLA Cluster Meetings

11/14 - 11/17/2008:

Locations: Jacksonville, Florida and Providence, Rhode Island

11/21 - 11/24/2008:

Locations: Dallas, Texas and Cincinnati, Ohio

Contact: Suellen Ward at 501-682-1115

11/21 - 11/23/2008

Business and Marketing

Education: National Phi Beta Lambda Fall Leadership Conference

Location: New Orleans, Louisiana

Contact: Peggy Wakefield at 501-683-5379

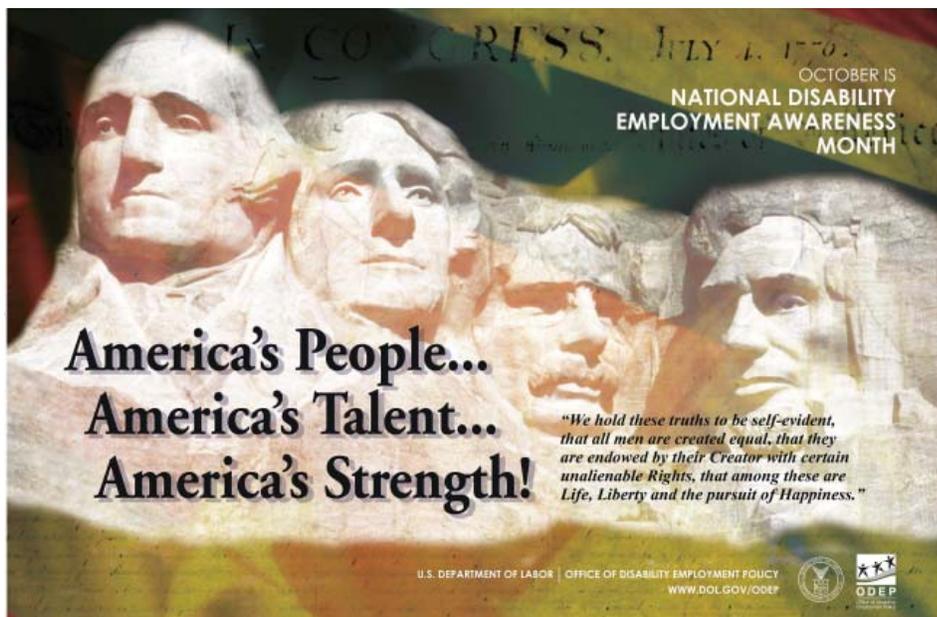
11/22 - 11/23/2008

Business and Marketing

Education: National FBLA Fall Leadership Conference

Location: New Orleans, Louisiana

Contact: Jim Brock at 501-682-1768



National Disability Employment Awareness Month set

U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao in August announced that “America’s People, America’s Talent... America’s Strength!” will be the official theme for 2008 National Disability Employment Awareness Month which is celebrated every October. The 2008 theme captures the accomplishments highlighted in the 2007 progress report on President Bush’s New Freedom Initiative for people with disabilities.

“Full access to community life for Americans with disabilities is an imperative and this year’s theme conveys the tremendous contributions that these Americans can make in the workplace,” said Secretary Chao.

Each October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month by congressional designation. The Labor Department’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) leads the nation’s activities and produces materials to increase the public’s awareness of the contributions and skills of American workers with disabilities. Typically, private sector, federal, state and local governments and advocacy organizations piggyback on the same theme to plan events and programs that showcase the abilities of employees and job candidates with disabilities.

“It is important to note that having people with disabilities in the workplace is valuable to the individual and to businesses,” said the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education’s Division of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services Commissioner Robert Treviño. “People with disabilities are the next great wave of diversity, and diversity fosters innovation to drive our economy and our nation into the future.”

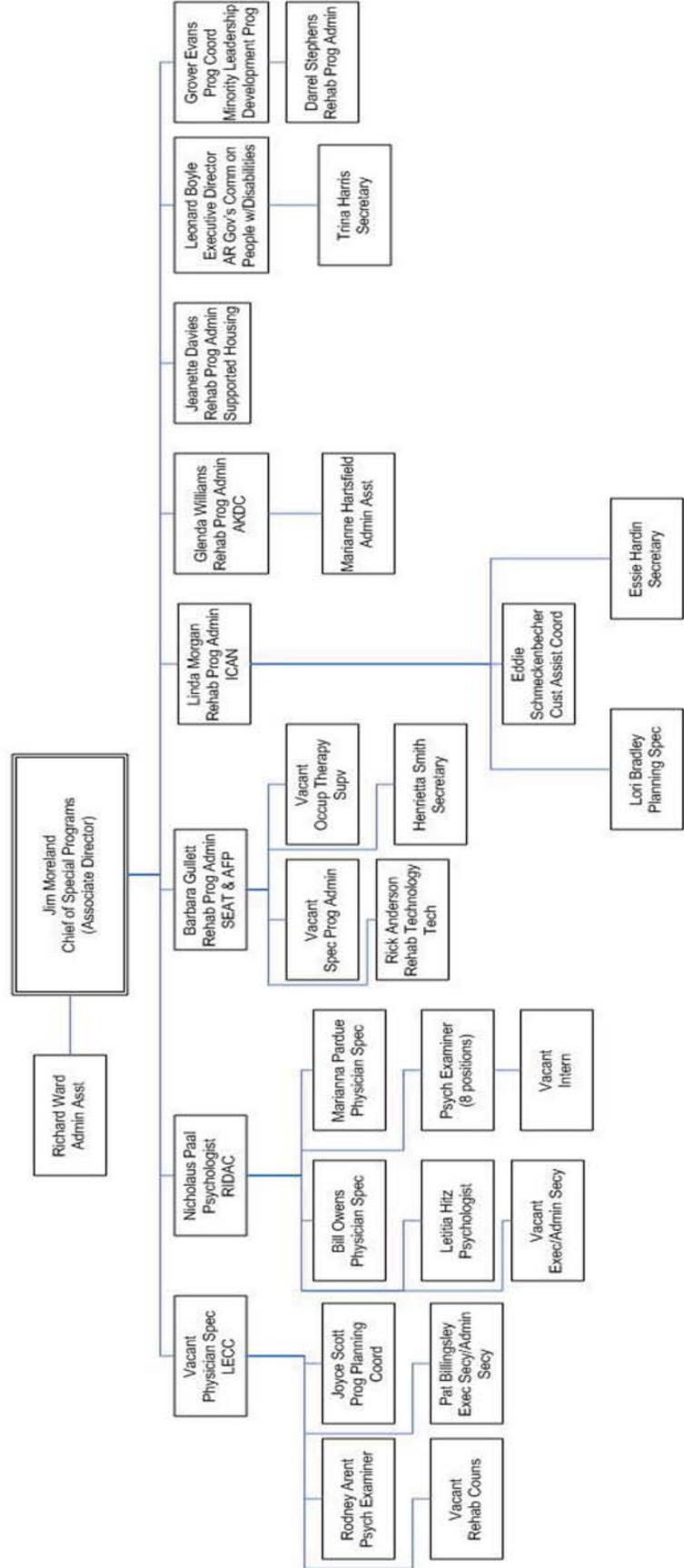
ODEP is leading a 21st century federal response to the historic underemployment of people with disabilities. In collaboration with other government agencies, public-and private-sector employers, and additional

MONTH continued from page 22

Correction

On page 27 of the July-August 2008 Workforce Counselor, Paige Cox was listed on the Organizational Chart for DWE Adult Education as Public School Program Advisor/Central WAGE Coordinator. She is the **State** WAGE Coordinator. We apologize for the error.

Department of Workforce Education
Division of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services
Special Programs



State Board of Workforce Education (SBWECO) assembles

The State Board of Workforce Education and Career Opportunities (SBWECO)

approved the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education's biennial budget requests for 2009-2011 along with policy and procedural changes for the Career and Technical Education division during the SBWECO bi-monthly meeting Aug. 6 at the Arkansas Career Training Institute (ACTI) in Hot Springs.

The meeting included the introduction of new board member **Justin Mitchell**, a tour of recently-remodeled ACTI dorm rooms and lunch prepared entirely by ACTI students and staff.

"Everyone has gone out of their way to make me feel welcomed," said Mitchell, who grew up in Atkins and currently lives in Little Rock and works for the Pulaski County Clerk's Office. "I am honored to have been appointed to serve on this wonderful board."

The board unanimously approved the budget after a presentation from Department of Workforce Education (DWE) Deputy Director of Finance **Charles Brown**. He reported DWE is requesting substantial funding and appropriation increases for the next biennium.

"We are requesting the increas-

es in an effort to provide equitable and adequate opportunities for those we serve," Brown said.

The board also unanimously approved changes to the Policies and Procedures for Secondary Programs, Adult Skills Training Classes and Secondary Vocational Centers following a presentation from **John Davidson**, Deputy Director for Career and Technical Education.

"In order to streamline and clarify teacher licensure guidelines for Career Orientation instructors, it is necessary to clarify, discuss and revise previous 2004 policies and procedures," Davidson said. "During the public comment period, we only received one letter and it was in support of the changes being made."

In another presentation to the board, Deputy Director of Adult Education **Jim Smith** said it has become necessary to update and make minor adjustments and technical corrections to the policies and procedures in accordance with federal and state guidelines. A marked-up copy of the policies and procedures has been placed on the DWE website for public review for

30 days.

"Upon the completion of the 30-day comment period, the policies will be brought to this board for approval and adoption," Smith said.

Other business at the meeting included an update from Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) **Commissioner Robert Treviño** on ARS activities. ARS Chief Financial Officer **John Wright** provided the board with an audit update and the progress of receiving new software.



(counterclockwise from top right): SBWECO Chairman **Jack Justus**, **Director Walker**, **Justin Mitchell**, **Commissioner Treviño**, **Martha Dixon**, **Phil Taylor** and **Jim Smith** tour dorm rooms; continuing the tour: **Director Walker**, **Phil Taylor** and **Justin Mitchell**; **Commissioner Treviño** listens as ARS Chief Financial Officer **John Wright** gives an audit update; **John Davidson**, Deputy Director for Career and Technical Education speaks to the Board; and ACTI Dietary Services Director **Jane Campbell** (third from left) and her staff accept accolades from the lunch crowd.



Barbara Lewis greets SBWECO members and ARS/DWE staff at luncheon provided by ACTI's Dietary Services department.



(l-r): Jack Justus, Jim Smith, Robert Treviño, Barbara Lewis, Justin Mitchell and Director Walker tour the ACTI dorm rooms.



(l-r): Justin Mitchell, Jane Campbell, Rodney Chandler, students Naomi Benson and Student Body President Marcus Johnson, Laurel Carnes and Carol Maples.



(l-r): Carol Maples, Juaniece Ammons, Curtis Faulkner, Tina LaFontaine and Mark Bogard.

SBWECO and DWE/ARS mix fellowship, food and fun at ACTI

August 6, 2008



Commissioner Treviño, Director Walker, and Dietary Services Director Jane Campbell



Commissioner Treviño and board member Lucy Ralston



DWE Associate Director Sandra Porter and Deputy Director John Davidson



Associate Director Rod Duckworth and Lucy Ralston



Curtis Faulkner, Jane Campbell and Jim Smith



Board Member Phil Taylor and Chairman Jack Justus

ACTI Cafeteria Best Deal in Town

Seven days a week, the employees and students at the Department of Workforce Education's Division of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services' Arkansas Career Training Institute (ACTI) in Hot Springs know they can count on a delicious, nutritious and homemade meal at the Institute's cafeteria thanks to a dedicated dietary staff. And the dietary crew is prepared to meet the challenge of serving more than just employees and students each day.

The cafeteria staff serves hungry parents, visitors and even members of the general public each day as part of its regular service. Food Production Manager and Certified Dietician Janey Hunter says it's all in a day's work.

"We've been doing it for 13 or 14 years now," Hunter says. "We have it down to a science. Most meals [the staff] discusses what we have to have and we serve it. We have run out before, but it doesn't happen very often."

Hunter says on the average day the cafeteria serves 180-190 diners for breakfast, 300-320 for lunch and 170-180 for dinner. Those numbers increase on cold and rainy days and wane near the beginning of each month and

on graduation days. She says that while most of the meals are prepared from scratch, the staff is always ready in case there is a surge of hungry customers.

"We always make 10 or 12 extra servings and keep backups," says Hunter. "We also have a deep fryer for chicken and fish and we have casseroles ready for use if we need them."

According to Hunter, the staff rarely has to resort to backup portions, but likes the safety of having extra available. Not only does the cafeteria prepare some of the best homemade food around, it does so at some of the most affordable prices anyone is likely to see anywhere.

For only \$3.00, diners can enjoy an entrée, two vegetables, a salad, dessert and a drink. Since the quality of the food is so high and the price is so low, Hunter says she's seeing more and more folks from

the community taking advantage of everything the cafeteria has to offer.

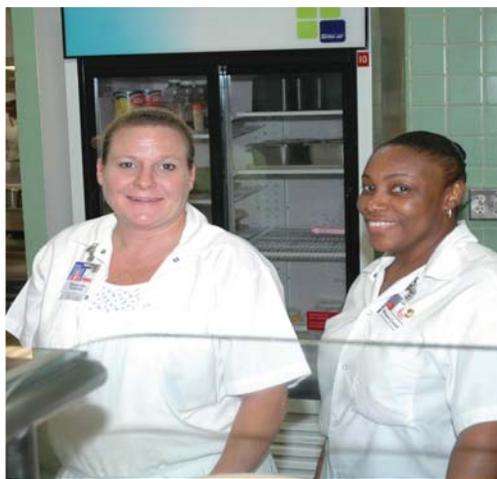
"I think, because of the economy, we're starting to see more and more elderly people," Hunter says. "They can eat here for less than it costs to make a meal at home."

Increased visits from outside diners are just one of many things that make everyday a surprise for the ACTI cafeteria staff, but day in and day out they're able to roll with the punches.

"We're prepared for everything," Hunter says. "We have to be."



(above) **Brenda Steward**, far right, serves the lunch crowd. (right) **Curtis Faulkner** takes pride in his job. (below) **Rhonda Tomlin** and **Margaret Everett** are ready to serve you a nutritious and delicious meal.





Arkansas Career Training Institute

The following is the first part of a continuing series about the Department of Workforce Education's (DWE) Division of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services' Arkansas Career Training Institute (ACTI) in Hot Springs.

The Arkansas Career Training Institute (ACTI) in Hot Springs offers 23 vocational training courses designed to prepare clients with disabilities for employment. Each course is set to provide individual instruction to meet each client's needs with an emphasis on employment in the competitive labor market.

Every program is designed to provide skills related to all aspects in particular career field. The estimated time required for program completion is based on a client's ability to meet all of that program's requirements.

"The individualized training distinguishes us from community colleges and vo-tech centers," says ACTI Director Dr. Dawn Simpson. "Serving clients with disabilities, having trainers to meet the needs of those students, individual writing centers, plans for employment after graduation – these are tools we can offer our students that other schools

cannot."

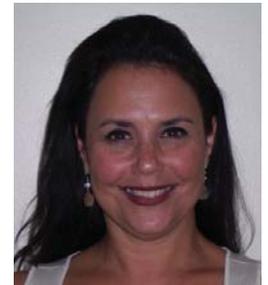
Simpson says the individualized training begins from day one when counselors assess clients to identify their interests and career goals in order to determine which training programs would be an appropriate fit.

"This is really effective in helping a student determine what they'll enjoy and have an aptitude for on the front end," says Dr. Simpson. "If that doesn't work, we have weekly tours of the campus to give the students a deeper understanding of what kind of training and careers are available. If they're still unsure, they can go through trial training and test out some of the programs and see what they like."

Dr. Simpson says she is also following the vision laid out by DWE Director William L "Bill" Walker, Jr. by helping transform ACTI into a "Center of Excellence" (she's already made that the ACTI motto). Dr. Simpson's contribution to the "Center of Excellence" concept includes applying to make ACTI a secondary center and helping to secure national accreditation for the Institute's training programs.

"When a program has national

accreditation, a student receives written proof that shows an employer that the student has the skills that make that student

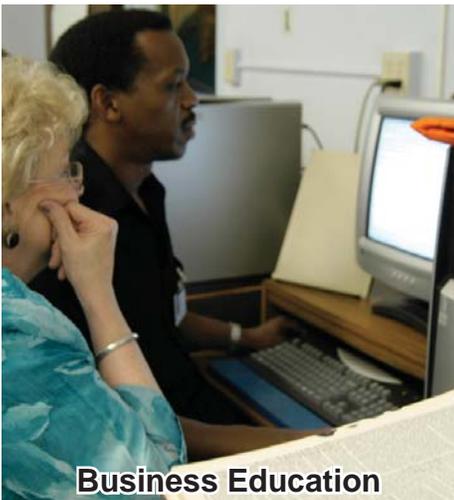


Dr. Dawn Simpson

more marketable," says Dr. Simpson. "We have several programs that have already earned national accreditation and others that are in the process of earning accreditation. Those that are earning accreditation should be complete before the end of the year."

ACTI programs already accredited or earning accreditation include auto collision repair, auto maintenance technology, construction technology, business education, printing/offset press and welding. Dr. Simpson says her goal is to

ACTI continued on page 25



Business Education



Certified Nursing Assistant



Small Engine Repair

District III Staff Dedicated to Improving Lives in Southeast Arkansas



Sterling Hughes

Despite being spread across southeastern Arkansas, the employees of the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education's Division of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services' District III have a lot in common.

District III, one of seven Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) districts in the state, contains

three field services offices – one each in **Pine Bluff**, **Monticello** and **Helena-West Helena**. The Field Services program is the basis of all ARS programs. Trained, experienced counselors administer to the vast majority of a client's needs and process all requests for services at one of 19 offices throughout Arkansas.

According to District III Manager Sterling Hughes, III, **the Pine Bluff office** may seem well staffed at first glance, but it has problems common to each office in the district. While these worries are in fact common to every ARS Field Services office in the state, they are particularly troublesome to the District III offices.

"We have five counselors on staff here – three for Jefferson County, one for Arkansas County and one for Grant and Cleveland Counties combined," Hughes said. "On top of that, we have four support staff and one staffer each for ODH (the Office for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired program), ATP (the Arkansas Transitional Support program) and clients with spinal cord injuries.



The Pine Bluff Staff (back row, l-r): Ray VonTunglen, Loren Cox, LaTasha Carlock, Sheila Sutton-Johnson, Bobby Johnson, and Pat Hefley.

(front row, l-r) Myrtle Johnson, Jeanette Bunting, Cynthia Baker-Smith, Juanita Grant, Angela Travelstead, and District Manager Sterling Hughes

Add myself, and we have only 13 people to serve each and every ARS client in a four-county area."

According to Hughes, counselors from the Pine Bluff office each served clients ranging from a low of 108 to a high of

412 in August alone. He says the Pine Bluff office could use at least one placement specialist to help career-training clients find jobs and an increased budget.

"Ninety percent of our cases are training cases," said Hughes. "We can't do what we did just three years ago. In that time, transportation prices have gone up 30 percent, but our budget has only increased 11 percent. We had to drop transportation in some cases in District III to provide funds for tuition and text books. That's a burden, because you can pay for a student to go to school, but you can't be sure if they're really going."

Hughes adds that tuition and text books are now causing a strain. He says student aid has been reduced by one-third and, since ARS is limited in the funds it can now provide, its clients must now turn to friends and family for help paying for higher and career education.

"Three or four years ago, [ARS] counselors could offer \$1,500 [in assistance] per student," said Hughes. "Now we can only give \$1,000. If you have 100 students, that's \$100,000. We need more funds. Our money comes from the state and federal government. We do everything we can to control our financial obligations in our medical cases so we'll have more funding available for training cases, but it really depends on what ARS can get."

Money, or lack thereof, is a daily concern in District III which serves a large portion of Arkansas's Delta region – traditionally the poorest and least educated area of the state. Hughes says it's a place where money and jobs are hard to come by.

"In Pine Bluff, we've suffered a lot of layoffs and plant closures," Hughes says. "We've lost around 2,000 jobs since 1997 or 1998. In Helena-West Helena, Fire-



District III *contued from page 18*

stone closed. The people who worked there all went to Mississippi to work for the casinos. I guess there's a Wal-Mart there where people can find work, but there really aren't any jobs there. In Monticello, they have the same problems that exist in Pine Bluff and Helena-West Helena."

The Helena-West Helena ARS Field Services office sits beneath a bright green awning in the quaint, but nearly-deserted downtown area of the city. The small, four-member staff is jovial overall, but concerned about the economic future of the one-time Mississippi River boomtown.



The Helena-West Helena Staff (l-r): Don Wallace, Betty Zane Wenzel, Laurie McLendon, and Debra Frazier

Counselor Laurie McLendon says the ARS Field Services staff there has the know-how to help turn the town's faltering economy around, but it needs a bit of help itself. Like Hughes in Pine Bluff, McLendon says the Helena-West Helena office could use a bigger staff, including a placement specialist and a larger budget.

"Jobs are hard to find around here unless you're a nurse or a teacher or have some other sort of marketable specialty," said McLendon. "It's difficult to access the placement resources we need to help our clients find jobs. We can't use the Employment Security Division (ESD) placement system for Mississippi to help people find work at the casinos. So, unfortunately, we and the people we work for are at a bit of a disadvantage."

Counselor Don Wallace adds that he and McLendon, Helena-West Helena's only counselors, carry an average caseload between 200 and 250 clients. He says that doesn't benefit anyone.

"Clients come in and beat the bushes to try and find the jobs that are available around here," Wallace said. "We have a big caseload. We can't devote as much time

to helping our clients search for jobs as we'd like."

It may seem as if only a masochist or someone lacking basic common sense would take a job in ARS District III, but that couldn't be farther from the truth. The majority of district employees are longtime veterans. **Monticello Field Services office** Rehabilitation Assistant Jody Gladden, a 25-year ARS employee, explains there's a reason behind the longevity.

Gladden admits that ARS counselors in the district have long dealt with making their dollars stretch beyond the limit. She says the division has done an outstanding job serving its clients, but that the lack of money is more pronounced in District III because of the widespread poverty and the large percentage of the population in need of help there.

Gladden adds the four-person Monticello office is no different than the Pine Bluff and Helena-West Helena offices, and she knows why so many people have worked so tirelessly for so long within the district doing what many might consider a thankless, impossible job.

"I do it because I know I'm being given a chance to help," Gladden says. "We all know we're making a difference in our clients' lives. We all enjoy working together. It's very frustrating sometimes, but it's those clients who say thank you and those who are very appreciative that make it all worthwhile."

While it may seem obvious to some, Gladden stresses her job and most other ARS and Field Services positions aren't for everyone.

"It takes someone with an interest in people with disabilities, someone who is flexible and someone who cares about people. As a Christian, this line of work is perfect for me because it's a service. It's serving other people."



The Monticello Staff (l-r): Pam Rochelle, Kay Craig, Jody Gladden, and Alvin Hooks

Nine Arkansas students to receive American FFA Degree

When the 81st Annual National FFA Convention takes place in Indianapolis this October, nine Arkansas FFA members will be awarded with the student organization's highest honor.

Beth Ann Bills of Prairie Grove FFA, Zachary Charles Coffman of Ola FFA, Whitney Jewell Downum of Springdale FFA, Christopher Dunn of Paragould FFA, Travis Houston Key of Gravette FFA, Mandy Lane Lenderman of Brookland FFA, Peyton Mullins of England FFA and Dustin C. Shannon and Andrew Clayton Stewart, each of Rural Special FFA, have all been unanimously accepted by the National FFA Board of Directors to receive a 2008 American FFA Degree. The Arkansas students are among 3,341 FFA members from 48 states and Puerto Rico who are set to receive the award this year.

The American FFA Degree is the highest degree of membership a

member can attain, and **only about one half of one percent of the total national membership of the organization have received this high honor.** The degree program represents the member's progress in leadership, agricultural education and the FFA Supervised Agricultural Experience.

"The American FFA Degree is the ultimate challenge and the ultimate accomplishment for FFA members," said Department of Workforce Education Agricultural Science and Technology Program Manager and State FFA Advisor Marion Fletcher. "This final step in the FFA Degree system encourages you to grow and achieve personally toward establishing yourself in an agricultural career."

Members must have already earned three prerequisite FFA degrees – the Greenhand, the Chapter FFA Degree and the State FFA Degree – before being allowed to even submit an application for the

American FFA Degree.

"The American FFA Degree is a sign of great accomplishment among FFA members," said Fletcher. "Only a small percentage of FFA members ever earn the degree. To advance to this degree requires commitment and a lot of hard work. You don't have to be a gifted student or live on a large farm or ranch to reach this goal. The FFA degree system is organized so that all FFA members, no matter where you are from, have an equal chance of obtaining the American FFA Degree."

Each recipient will receive a special framed certificate and the coveted Gold Key, symbolic of this high degree of membership. Recipients will also be honored at a reception held to recognize their achievements. The recognition is sponsored as a special project of the National FFA Foundation by Case IH; Farm Credit System; Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc. and Syngenta.

Sanchez earns UAMS Practical Skills certification to benefit agency

Irma Sanchez, Secretary in the Department of Workforce Education's Division of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services' Batesville field office, recently completed training earning her certification as a Spanish-to-English Medical Interpreter from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock. Sanchez spent six days completing the "Bridging the Gap" Practical Skills Course.

"I really enjoyed it," Sanchez says. "Sometimes you think you know something so well, and then you get to studying it and realize you can still learn!"

In December, Sanchez will mark her third year with Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS). She says she has seen the need for an interpreter in that time, especially when medical terminology creates a barrier to understanding the rehabilitation process.

She quickly decided that, since she could speak and understand both Spanish and English fluently, she "wanted to be of whatever use" she could.

Counselors now come to her not only for spoken translations, but with written projects as well. She has recently translated the ARS client application into Spanish, and is more than happy to contribute her skills whenever needed.

ARS Commissioner Robert Treviño commends Sanchez for her commitment to ARS.

"Ms. Sanchez is an example of a support staff member bringing a valuable skill to the agency and achieving professional certification for the benefit of our agency and its consumers," Treviño said.



ACTI Staff share Personal Paths to Success

The Department of Workforce Education's Division of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services' Arkansas Career Training Institute (ACTI) students joined together at the ACTI campus in Hot Springs August 26 to hear stories from staffers David Tunncliff, Mary Boyle and Freddie McLain and graduate Scott Dyer on how to maintain a good attitude and be successful at school and in the workplace.



Auto collision program instructor **David Tunncliff** (above) discussed his time as an ACTI student in 1984-85. He called his graduation a "true turning point in my life."

"That enabled me to transition from an unskilled factory worker to an auto collision technician," Tunncliff said.

He credited his success to having a good attitude and a strong

work ethic, adding a combination of the two was the key to longevity on the job.

"I saw many men come and go from jobs while I was working in the private sector," said Tunncliff. "Most of them lost their jobs because of a poor work ethic."



Finance secretary **Mary Boyle** (above) told the students that she learned about flexibility and how to be a team player while she received her Business and General Clerical Education along with her GED while attending ACTI in the mid-1970s.

During his address, tour guide **Freddie McLain** suggested that a big part of success in the workplace comes from being prepared for inevitable changes. He explained how his job had changed over the years and how it was beneficial to adapt and "learn to go with the flow."

Graduate **Scott Dyer's** recommendations came from an outsider's perspective. Dyer suggested the students should "always listen to what people in authority have to say." To further his point, he stressed the importance of being on time, asking questions and reminded the students to always do their best.



ACTI Student Life supervisor **Jay Erwin** (above), who organized the assembly, said this event and others like it provide students with examples of how former students have come through the program, what they have learned and how they have applied what they have learned to become successful in their professional lives.

ACTI Takes a Break for Annual Play Day Get-Together



ACTI Administrator **Barbara Lewis** and Chaplain **Mel Wilson** pose with student **Frank Pruikma**, who designed this year's Play Day t-shirt (pictured).

September 25 was the day for the annual event all of the Arkansas Career Training Institute's staff, students and families look forward to: **Play Day**. With horseshoes, fishing, egg toss, face painting and plenty of good food including grilled burgers, hot dogs and ice cream, it was the ideal way to usher in fall and enter into some friendly competition with friends and co-workers!



Students **Carolyn Justice** and **Kealey Elmore** serve sodas during another sunny Play Day.

Teachers attend FACS Conferences at Ferndale

Even though school was out, the summer months were busy for the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education's Career and Technical Education Occupational Programs, including Family and Consumer Science Education.

"From June to August it's practically non-stop for us," said Suellen Ward, Family and Consumer Science Education Program Manager.

One of the most popular of the summer events was

the Family and Consumer Science Conference held July 14-18 at the Arkansas 4-H center in Ferndale. More than 250 teachers attended.

"We strongly encouraged all Family and Consumer Science teachers to attend the conference," Ward said. "That's where they learn new information for the new school year, learn of policy changes, hear motivational speakers and have mini-sessions where they get to share classroom ideas with other teachers."

In August, the Family and Consumer Science staff worked in conjunction with the University of Arizona Family Economics and Financial Education Project to hold a work-

shop to help train teachers in the area of finance education.

"The teachers were able to see powerpoints and learn about other teaching strategies to help them in the classroom," Ward said. "Personal and Family Finance is an elective class in schools, but it's becoming more and more popular in today's society. Students can learn everything from how to examine a credit card application and how to deal with financial problems."



MONTH continued from page 12

stakeholders, ODEP facilitates the development and implementation of innovative policies and practices necessary to achieve a fully inclusive workplace. ODEP's work primarily falls into three categories: employers and the workplace, workforce systems, and employment-related supports which include education and training, health care, reliable transportation, affordable housing and assistive technology. For more information, visit www.dol.gov/odep.

In Arkansas, the DWE Division of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) provides a coordinated set of activities designed to help those with physical or mental impairments prepare for and achieve gainful employment. These activities are outcome-oriented and promote smooth transition from school to post-school activities that can consist of post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment, continuing and adult education, adult services and independent living.

It's hard to argue with the success of ARS and its clients. In Fiscal Year 2007, Arkansans with disabilities who received training from ARS had average weekly earnings of \$85.91 prior to training. Following training and job placement through ARS, clients averaged earnings of \$384.46 a week. Their combined earnings totaled \$46.2 million in their first year of employment..

"It's exciting to see this year's theme for National Disability Employment Awareness Month – 'America's People, America's Talent... America's Strength!'" Treviño said. "People with disabilities have plenty to offer in the workplace. It's time they're recognized for what they are – talented, strong and, above all, people!"

Who Is

Chris Pleimann?



- ① Husband and Father
- ② Farmington Resident
- ③ Police Sergeant
- ④ GED Graduate
- All of the Above

Chris Pleimann says, "Without getting my GED, I wouldn't be able to do what I do in law enforcement. I am now a sergeant with the Farmington Police Department and handle training issues and all aspects related to patrol. When I talk to troubled youngsters, I try to point out to them the path that I was on and encourage them to get their GED."

Learn how the GED tests can work for you. Contact the Department of Workforce Education Adult Education/GED division at 501-682-1980, or visit us on the web at <http://dwe.arkansas.gov>

Mature. Motivated.
And ready to prove it.

GED *prove yourself*



Sandra Porter
Associate Director for
Workforce Training
Arkansas Department of
Workforce Education

SMT Update

Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) held its 25th Annual National Training Seminar in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 7-11, 2008. Over 400 JAG specialists and administrators from around the nation attended the conference to learn innovative ideas to assist JAG students, share success stories and recognize a selected group of individuals and organizations who have helped make those successes possible.

Jobs for America's Graduates is a broad-based school-to-work program designed to assist students whose ability to successfully graduate from high school and obtain meaningful employment is in jeopardy. The program's goal is to ensure student graduation (or GED achievement) and prepare them for workplace success whether their career begins immediately upon high school graduation or requires them to complete post-secondary education / training. Jobs for America's Graduates announced a 94 percent graduation rate across the JAG national network and a greater than 40 percent rate of enrollment in higher education – one of the highest in the country.

As Congress and the Administration consider reauthorization of No Child Left Behind, the Workforce Investment Act, and the Higher Education Act, national JAG was invited by the House and Senate Committee leadership to present recommendations for consideration

based on Jobs for America's Graduates 27 years of experience in having served over 550,000 young people. Jobs for Arkansas's Graduates, the state organization, is under the direction of Arkansas Department of Workforce Education Program Manager Marylene Tate. Dennis Butler, JAG Specialist at Batesville High School functions as Technical Assistance Coordinator.

Jobs for America's Graduates operates in 26 states and the District of Columbia. Jobs for Arkansas's Graduates is affiliated with the national organization and is currently located in 36 Arkansas high schools and implemented by 41 certified JAG Specialists.

This year, Jobs for Arkansas's Graduates along with Jobs for America's Graduates have much to celebrate. Arkansas broke a state record by receiving five state awards, four outstanding Specialist awards, and twenty-two 5-of-5 awards, placing Arkansas third in the nation for 5-of-5. In order to receive a 5-of-5 award, the Specialist must meet or exceed National JAG standards in five critical areas of effectiveness. None of this would be possible without the confidence and commitment of the frontline Specialists who work each and every day with passion and genuine concern for their students.

Leadership from the JAG National Board of Directors has contributed to the overall success of JAG. Governor Mike Beebe joined

JAG's National Board of Directors and will host a National Board meeting in Arkansas in the Spring of 2009.

5-of-5 Awards

- Cheryl Burns** - Bald Knob High School
- Dennis Butle** - Batesville High School
- Brenda Early** - Cabot High School 1
- Vickie Nichols** - Farmington High School
- Caron Morris** - Fordyce High School
- JoNell Thomas** - Greenwood High School
- Sherrie Mays** - Hall High School
- Cheryl Morrison** - Hope High School
- Mary Jacobs** - J.A. Fair High School
- Pearl Howse** - Jacksonville High School
- Barbara Milner** - Joe T. Robinson High School
- Gladys Godley** - McClellan High School
- Karen Purvis** - Mena High School
- Shirley Mershon** - Mountain Home High School
- Linda Black** - Newport High School
- Brenda Butler** - NLR High School 2
- Gracia Stroud** - North Pulaski High School
- Janet Powell** - Ozark High School
- Jennie Palmer** - Quitman High School
- Terri Bone** - Sheridan High School
- Sherrie James** - Springdale High School 1
- Britt James** - Springdale High School 2
- Priscilla Lawson** - Sylvan Hills High School

SMT continued on page 25

GRANTS *continued from page 1*
again approved.

In year three, the Consortium's dream was fully realized. Members approached DWE again for grant assistance and was once more blessed. The three schools represented in the Consortium—Arkansas Northeastern College in Blytheville, Eastark Secondary Career Center in Forrest City and Mid-South Community College in West Memphis—had created a Biofuel Advanced Manufacturing Technology program of study which was in full-swing. The course was filling up at partner high schools and the three original programs each received another DWE New Program Start-up Grant—this time for roughly \$115,000 apiece or \$345,000 overall.

According to Davidson, the DWE grants have become almost secondary—covering the costs of the high school programs since the college courses now have the support of major federal grants.

Imitation must be the sincerest form of flattery if Phillips County Community College of the University of Arkansas (PCCCUA) is any indication. PCCCUA is trying to duplicate the success of the Delta Consortium and the Department of Workforce Education is again lending a hand. The school received a \$25,000 Perkins grant to begin a Biofuel program of study of its own. This course will start in 11th grade and continue through college.

Davidson says it's part of the DWE mission to make areas more attractive to business and industry.

"We have to listen to the needs of business and industry and meet with education, local and state leaders and determine how to meet those needs," DWE Director William L. "Bill" Walker, Jr. "[The biofuel] effort is only the beginning of a partnership that will grow through the years to support the biofuel in-

dustry and create jobs in the Delta region. We welcome the opportunity to respond to this need."

The Department of Workforce Education is trying to meet additional industry needs as quickly as it can.

Last March, many of the people of Paris, Arkansas, had their lives changed forever. When the nearby Cargill Beef Packing Plant burned and executives decided not to rebuild, several Paris residents found themselves unemployed and without any job prospects. Despite three manufacturers in town who were hiring and paying good wages, many of those affected by the Cargill disaster were unable to find manufacturing jobs because they lacked the skills the employers required.

"K.A.T. Aerodynamics, which has been in Paris for just two or three months, came in and needed new workers," said Western Co-op Career and Technical Education Coordinator Jane Phillips. "They got 700 applications, but they could only hire a few people because none of applicants had the skills they needed."

University of Arkansas at Fort Smith (UAFS), Arkansas Tech University-Ozark and Paris School District leaders along with other area education representatives determined the best way for workers in the region to learn new skills was for educators to unite and offer manufacturing courses throughout the area. For further assistance, they called Davidson and CTE Associate Director Rod Duckworth.

"It's great that they got together the way they did to discuss ways to teach manufacturing," says Davidson. "We, as an agency, can respond to needs. Our grants serve as quick-response money."

According to Davidson, the CTE Division may issue a planning grant

to help fund classes around Paris.

New-Program Start-up Grants are awarded to Arkansas schools and districts, and career training centers each year to purchase new equipment to create new or significantly expand existing programs of study or courses. Grant applications are competitively graded upon, among other things, program goals, student benefits, employment opportunities, school facilities, employment opportunities and course demand. The agency most recently awarded 72 New Start-up Grants in the amount of \$2.37 million to 60 schools for the 2008-09 school year.

The CTE Division likewise awards federal Carl D. Perkins Grants. Perkins IV legislation requires states, districts and schools to develop programs of study with coherent, rigorous and non-duplicative courses that lead to an industry-recognized credential or an associate's or bachelor's degree. Those are considered tools for creating a seamless system of career exploration, academic presentation, career and technical studies, industry-specific knowledge, skill development and workforce connections to meet the needs of students and business and industry. Perkins Grants are awarded in three separate phases. The Planning Phase grant with its \$20,000 maximum award ran from March 29 to August 21, 2008, and 28 schools were awarded grants totaling \$550,350. The Implementation Phase grant offers a \$75,000 maximum award and is currently underway, running September 1 to June 30, 2009. The third and final phase, the Evaluation Phase grant features a \$25,000 maximum award and spans from July 1 to June 30, 2010.

DWE has set aside reserve funding for the development or improvement of high-skill, high-wage and high-demand programs of study.

NASASP members attend Congressional Breakfast

The National Association of State Agencies for Surplus Property (NASASP) met in Washington, D.C., September 16 & 17, 2008 for a Congressional Breakfast. The focus of the breakfast was to educate and inform members of Congress about the need to re-locate procurement provisions to the end of the property disposal chain of events.



Pictured (l-r): **Greg Conn of the Texas State Agency for Surplus Property, Jim Smith, Deputy Director for Adult Education, U.S. Sen. Mark Pryor and Altus Mayor Veronica Post.**



Pictured (l-r): **Greg Conn of the Texas State Agency for Surplus Property, 2nd District U.S. Congressman Vic Snyder, Mayor Post and Jim Smith**

Division of Adult Education Deputy Director of Adult Education James H. Smith, Jr., a former NASASP President, attended the meeting and also assisted current NASASP National Officers with meeting arrangements.

Altus Mayor Veronica Post also attended to represent Mayors nationwide. U.S. Congressmen John Boozman and Mike Ross sent "Dear Colleague Letters" encouraging staff and congressmen to attend. Twelve congressional offices were represented. Congressman Boozman challenged those in attendance to work closely with his office in support of this meeting and mission.

ACTI continued from page 17

earn accreditation for the remaining ACTI programs: auto parts counter person, certified nursing assistant, cosmetology, environmental systems service/laundry, food service, printing/bindery, prepress, sales and marketing, small engines/groundskeeping and small engine mechanics.

Simpson says ACTI goes beyond training its clients for employment alone, but addresses the whole student to increase the chances of program completion and future employment. For those students who need it, Adult Basic Education and GED classes are available. Likewise, Employment Readiness Training is designed to enhance the employability of clients in areas such as self-confidence, communications, anger management and first impressions is available.

ACTI also offers job placement and job club services to help its students advance toward employment.

"As graduation approaches we help the student find employment with the job search, resumés, etc.," said Dr. Simpson. "We like to look at what we do as bookend employability. From helping a student find the training and careers that fit best on the front end to helping them find a job on the back end, we're a full employment readiness program."

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Outstanding Specialists

- Dennis Butler** - Batesville High School, for developing exceptional relationships with the local business community, Workforce Investment Board and developing a DVD to market the program.
- Eunice Eble** - Northside High School, Fort Smith, for receiving a \$10,000 grant from AARP to enhance the JAG program at Northside High School.
- Gladys Godley** - McClellan High School, Little Rock, for receiving a \$5,000 grant from the Public Education Foundation of Little Rock to enhance the JAG program at McClellan High School.
- Mary V. Jacobs** - J.A. Fair High School, Little Rock, for receiving a \$5,000 grant from the Public Education Foundation of Little Rock to enhance the JAG program at J.A. Fair High School.

Top JAG State Organization Awards

- **5-of-5**
- **Average Number of Contact Hours**
- **Placement in High Wage Industries** (Construction, Finance and Insurance)
- **JAG Model Performance Outcomes** (+90% Graduation Rate, Full-Time Jobs Rate, Full-Time Placement Rate)

Proclamation

To all whom these presents shall come—Greetings

Whereas: Democracy is based upon an educated citizenry, in which people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds have access to education in order to become self-sufficient, actively participating members of society; and

Whereas: Adult education provides learning opportunities for citizens who have not obtained high-school credentials, who have not mastered basic skills before graduating from high school, or who are non-native English speakers; and

Whereas: The Adult Education Section of the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education supports adult education programs in each of the 75 counties throughout the state of Arkansas and

Whereas: These programs serve a diversity of students, including those with learning disabilities, physical and emotional difficulties, as well as those who are in family literacy classes or correctional institutions; and

Whereas: Adult education offers classes in reading, writing, and math to prepare adults to take the General Educational Development (GED®) Tests to earn an Arkansas High School diploma; to learn English as a Second Language (ESL); and to further educational, personal, job, and family-life goals; and

Whereas: Adult education offers the Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE™) program and other workplace classes to develop work skills, including basic computer literacy, problem solving, and communication;

Whereas: Adult education works cooperatively with local, state, and federal agencies to meet the goals and needs of these sometimes underserved Arkansans; and

It is timely and appropriate that attention be focused on the special efforts and dedication of Arkansas' adult educators who prepare individuals for productive employment and enriched lives.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mike Beebe, Governor of the State of Arkansas, do hereby proclaim the week of **October 5-11, 2008** as

Adult Education Week

And **Wednesday, October 8** as

GED Pride Day

And urge all its citizens to become familiar with the services and benefits offered by adult education and to support and participate in these programs.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Arkansas to be affixed this 9th day of September, in the year of our Lord 2008.



Attending the proclamation ceremony were (l-r): **Janice Hanlon, GED Program Manager; Jim Smith, Deputy Director for Adult Education; Governor Mike Beebe; and DWE Director Bill Walker**

Mitchell joins State Board of Workforce Education and Career Opportunities

Justin Mitchell, an Atkins native who currently lives in Little Rock and is the Pulaski County Deputy Clerk, is the newest member of the State Board of Workforce Education and Career Opportunities (SBWECO).

Mitchell was appointed by Gov. Mike Beebe and feels he was selected to serve based on his diverse background, which includes working on the family farm, being a public servant and knowing what it takes to be hired in today's workforce as a public administrator.

"I was very pleased and humbled when the Governor's Office called and asked if I would be interested in serving on the board," Mitchell said. "I am very proud to be selected and look forward to learning as much as I can about the Department of Workforce Education (DWE)."

Mitchell grew up in rural Arkansas, helping work on the family farm in Atkins. He graduated from Atkins High School in 1993 and for the next two years helped raise cattle and crops on the farm. Mitchell soon became interested in public service and enrolled at Arkansas Tech University in Russellville. He graduated in 1999 with a degree in history and political science.

Since that time Mitchell served a term as president of the Young Democrats of Arkansas before joining the administrative staff at the Pulaski County Circuit Clerk's office.

"I grew up in a small town and there seem to be fewer and fewer educational and career opportunities in rural areas," he said. "I lived in a town that lost two plants meaning a lot of lost jobs and a town that was devastated by a tornado – two things that really impacted people's lives."

Mitchell attended his first SBWECO meeting Aug. 6 at the Arkansas Career Training Institute (ACTI) in Hot



Justin Mitchell

Springs.

"Everyone, from other board members to staff members, all bent over backwards to make me feel at home," Mitchell said. "I felt like I was a veteran member of the board because of the wonderful treatment I received. I really felt at home."

Quickly becoming fully acquainted with the agency and its needs is a top priority, he said.

"Attending the meeting, I realized quickly that I have a lot to catch up on," Mitchell said.

"I was given a lot of information to read and go over and have been getting more and more familiar with different things."

While he admits he is more familiar with the vocational education part of the agency, he also has a personal connection to the Division of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services part of the agency.

"A good friend of mine went mountain biking one day, had an accident and became a quadriplegic," Mitchell said. "I know how important rehab services were to him, services that helped him return to the workforce. He is now a teacher. So I look forward to learning more about the rehab side and how it helps the citizens of Arkansas."

In the meantime, Mitchell said he's going to continue to study all aspects of the agency and be prepared to help make decisions when the board meets again.

"If someone were to mention the Department of Workforce Education to me before I became a board member, I would think it was just an agency which trained people coming out of high school and adult education," Mitchell said. "I've certainly gotten an eye-opener since then and have been very pleased to do so. I am very excited there are so many components, and I am very proud to be a part of it all."

Getting acquainted at the SBWECO Board meeting with...



...fellow board member Ludy Ralston...



...DWE Director Bill Walker...



...ACTI Administrator Barbara Lewis, ACTI Vocational Training Supervisor Dr. Dawn Simpson, and ARS Commissioner Robert Treviño.



Arkansas Department of Workforce Education

State Board of Workforce Education and Career Opportunities

Jack Justus, Chairman, Searcy, AR; **Phil Taylor**, Vice Chairman, Jonesboro, AR; **Richard Smith**, Tillar, AR; **Kathy Scarsdale**, Harrison, AR; **Lucy Ralston**, Fayetteville, AR; **Martha Dixon**, Arkadelphia, AR; **Justin Mitchell**, Little Rock, AR

Administration

William L. "Bill" Walker, Jr., Director; **Robert P. Treviño**, Commissioner for Division of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services; **John L. Davidson**, Deputy Director for Career and Technical Education; **James Smith**, Deputy Director for Adult Education; **Charles Brown**, Deputy Director for Finance; **Reginald L. Jackson**, Deputy Director for Communications; **Ken Musteen**, Chief of Field Services/Associate Director for Division of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services; **Barbara Lewis**, Associate Director/Administrator of Arkansas Career Training Institute; **Roderic Duckworth**, Associate Director for Career and Technical Education; **Sandra Porter**, Associate Director for Workforce Training; **John Wright**, Chief Financial Officer/Associate Director for Division of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services; **Jim Moreland**, Associate Director for Special Programs for Division of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services; **Pamela D. Harris**, Human Resources Administrator

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