March 2010

the Career Counselor

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501-682-1500 * http://ace.arkansas.gov

Career Coaches Participate in Two-Day Training Session

Arkansas Works' new career and college coaches were treated to an enthusiastic and informative two-day training session in January. The purpose of the session was to equip these 43 new coaches, who began their jobs in January, with information and resources to help them in their work with students in Arkansas's most economically challenged counties.

Governor Mike Beebe, Department of Career Education Director William L. "Bill" Walker, Jr., Department of Higher Education Director Dr. Jim Purcell and Arkansas Chamber of Commerce President Randy Zook shared with the coaches how important their work will be not only to the students but to the state as well.

"You have the opportunity to guide these students toward career and education pathways they may not have otherwise known existed," Governor Beebe said. "You can show them the opportunities available to those willing to work hard for them."

Education is what gives our people a chance to have that dream. But a lot of them can't dream it because they can't see it," Governor Beebe told the coaches. "They can't see it because nobody has ever stopped and taken the time to show them the pathway. You are empowering young people to be able to see what they can be."

Above: **Governor Beebe welcomes the new career coaches. Pictured with the Governor are some of the coaches and ACE Director Bill Walker (left of the Governor).**

"This is not just a job," said Director Walker in his remarks to the coaches. "This is a mission. This is a calling. It requires going beyond just the normal eight-to-five job, and I think we've have that type of commitment in this room."

The highlight of the second day of the training was a message from Dr. Fitz Hill, president of Arkansas Baptist College in Little Rock, who received a standing ovation following his speech. Dr. Hill stressed the importance of an education and how it cannot be assumed that students who go to college are properly prepared for the demands of college life.

"Thank you for what you are doing," Dr. Hill told the coaches. "You will be making a difference in the lives of young adults who need it the most."

One of the career coaches is a face familiar to many Arkansans. Marcus Monk, a former football and

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Above, photos left to right: Arkansas Chamber of Commerce President Randy Zook, Department of Education Communications Director Julie Thompson, and ACE Director Bill Walker (left to right) visit before the dinner session; former Razorback and new career coach Marcus Monk (left) is interviewed by the media; career coaches hear from ACE Associate Director Sonja Wright-McMurray; Director Walker greets keynote speaker Dr. Fitz Hill, president of Arkansas Baptist College.

Director's Update

William L. "Bill" Walker, Jr.
Director
Arkansas Department of Career Education

With a new year come new hopes, new visions and new responsibilities – and 2010 is no different at the Arkansas Department of Career Education (ACE). We did a great deal of good work during the previous year, but it's no time to rest on our laurels. We have created a strong foundation to build a kind of workforce Governor Beebe and our agency have envisioned for our state, but we must push even harder to build on that foundation.

ACE's leadership in the Governor's Arkansas Works program is part of how we build on our foundation, and the college and career and college coaches are now on the ground doing a lot of the heavy lifting. Forty-three coaches have been at work in 21 of our state's poorest counties helping economically challenged and at-risk students realize that it is possible for them to attend and graduate from college and then find a job to lift themselves out of poverty.

These coaches are showing students in the high schools they serve the value of education. They are changing the game. They are offering hope to students who otherwise would have had no hope and showing them that through education and career training, they can rise above their circumstances, take control of their lives and become whatever they want to be. The Arkansas Works program shows the pure power and possibility of education, hard work and desire to improve one's situation. The coaches are helping to build the future workforce of Arkansas. They are doing it face-to-face with the students most in need of their help.

I'd like to congratulate Associate Director Sonja Wright-McMurray, who directs Arkansas Works, for the early success of the career coaches program, and I encourage everyone learn more about it and support it in any way possible. It really does have the possibility to change the economic future of our state and the fortunes of countless numbers of Arkansans. You can read more about the coaches in the front-page story of this newsletter.

I'd also like to welcome Dr. Thomas Flowers and John Riggs, IV, as the newest members of the State Board of Career Education. Both gentlemen have a wealth of experience that will help the board continue what it has built in career and technical education, in adult education and in career education for persons living with disabilities.

Dr. Flowers is a retired educator with 30 years experience. He most recently served as vice chancellor of instruction at the University of Arkansas Community College at Morillton. His experience with postsecondary institutions and interest in career education will provide insight into issues the board regularly tackles.

Mr. Riggs is a former state senator from Little Rock who has been president of his family's industrial and construction equipment business for 15 years. His knowledge of state government and civic and community affairs is second to none, and our board is going to be richer for having him as a member.

Combined, Dr. Flowers and Sen. Riggs bring the kind of knowledge and experience that will make the State Board of Career Education even stronger in its service to the people of Arkansas.

Finally, the new year is going to bring a new address for some of us within the agency.

Our Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) central office has out-

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Arkansas Department ACE of Career Education
the Career Counselor

A public information pamphlet of the Arkansas Department of Career Education and the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services Division.

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DECA Recognizes Alma High School's School Store

Aire-Looms, the school-based enterprise (SBE) at Alma High School, recently achieved Gold Recertification and will be recognized at DECA's International Career Development Conference in Louisville, Kentucky. The store is the only one of its kind in Arkansas and one of just 42 school-based enterprises in the nation. Aire-Looms takes its name from the school's mascot, the Airedale.

DECA's School-based Enterprise (SBE) Certification Program was developed to provide recognition for outstanding achievement by school-based enterprises. School stores can be certified at three levels: Bronze, Silver or Gold. In order to apply for the certification, Alma's DECA chapter had to submit extensive documentation showing how it achieved standards outlined in DECA's certification guidelines for school-based enterprises. Students who worked on the certification process were Teryl Robinson, Lacy Patterson, Jacqui Fercho and Ashley LaMar, with the assistance of their advisors Sherry Siler and Ross White.

Aire-Looms opened in December 2007. White's middle school marketing students and Siler's high school marketing students operate the store. Alma has 150 business students in grades eight through twelve, and 120 belong to the DECA club.

In 2009, Aire-Looms' sales totaled $59,509. The biggest month was August, when Aire-Looms sold more than $13,000 worth of merchandise. But even in July, when the school was closed, the store brought in $5,250.

Aire-Looms provides marketing students real

ALMA *continued on page 16*

The student-operated Aire-looms stocks a wide array of gifts and apparel.

State Board of Career Education Adds Two New Members

Dr. Thomas Flowers

The State Board of Career Education (SBCE) welcomed two new members during its February 4 meeting.

Dr. Thomas Flowers of Center Ridge and **John Riggs, IV**, of Little Rock were recently appointed by Governor Mike Beebe to serve on the board. Both say they are eager to draw from their complex backgrounds to contribute in their new positions on the board.

Dr. Flowers is a retired educator with 30 years experience as a high school counselor, school superintendent and community college administrator. He retired from the University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton (UACCM) following 16 years of service as vice president of student services, dean of students and, most recently, vice chancellor of instruction.

Dr. Flowers joined UACCM in 1992 after working as a teacher and counselor in the Nemo Vista School District for 13 years and as superintendent for three years. Dr. Flowers moved from Nemo Vista to work with the Arch Ford Education Service Cooperative in Plumerville before going to UACCM.

Dr. Flowers is currently a member of the Conway County Quorum Court and the Conway County School Counts! Initiative Steering Committee and has been involved with several other civic groups. He holds a doctorate in higher education administration.

"I look forward to the opportunity to serve on the board," Dr. Flowers said. "I am very interested in career and technical education and adult education, and I'm excited about the opportunity to be able to contribute in the field I love so much.

"I have a familiarity with many areas [of career education] and I look forward to working with and learning about the areas that I am unfamiliar with."

John Riggs, IV

Riggs is a former state senator and president of J. A. Riggs Tractor Company, an industrial and construction equipment distributor which serves customers in and around Arkansas. He is the fourth generation of the Riggs family to helm the business. Prior to being named president in 1995, Riggs held various positions within the company in areas including sales, rental, marketing and used equipment.

He is active in civic and community affairs in Arkansas and the greater Little Rock area. Riggs represented District 16 in the State Senate from 1999 to 2002, where he served on the Education, Performance-Based Budgeting, Economic and Tax Policy and Children and Youth committees, along with several others. In addition to his elected post, he has served on the boards of Volunteers in Public Schools, the Pulaski County United Way, Arkansas Business and Education Alliance and Philander Smith College.

Riggs was elected to and served on the Little Rock School District Board of Education from 1992-1999 and is currently a member of the Arkansas Virtual Academy Board. He is a past member of the Greater Little Rock Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.

"I'm excited to be on the State Board of Career Education and excited to work with Senator [Bill] Walker again, and the other board members," Riggs said. The Department of Career Education "fills a much-needed spot in workforce development in Arkansas, and I am excited to be able to contribute whatever I can."

Riggs said his experience will be a boon to the board and the Department of Career Education and to the populations they target.

"I've got a background in serving both the state legislature and local school boards, and I run a fairly large business that employs many of the types of people this agency is trying to serve," he said.

What You Should Know

Telecommunications Access Program (TAP)

Lynn Franquemont
Program Director

The year 2009 proved to be the busiest yet for TAP. We assisted a record number of Arkansans with their communication needs with over 1,300 applications coming in from individuals all over the state who needed some type of specialized communication equipment. Since TAP was established by the Arkansas General Assembly through Act 501 of 1995, this equipment has been making it possible for over 8,000 Arkansans to keep in touch with family, friends and business associates.

This last year also brought about some changes in the technology that we distribute to TAP customers. Some of the phones that we distributed when the program began are now considered obsolete. For example, the Tele Braille that we distributed to our deaf blind customers is no longer being produced, so TAP has had to look elsewhere for devices to aid our deaf blind customers with communication. The DeafBlind Communicator proved to be a solution to this problem. It offers users three types of communication: face-to-face, TTY and text messaging. The DeafBlind Communicator has special TTY software installed and an internal modem so that a landline can be connected, making a separate TTY unnecessary. Another feature it has that the old telebraille did not have is that it provides the customer the ability to communicate face-to-face with sighted persons.

Deaf Blind Communicator

Another phone that is quickly becoming outdated is the TTY. More and more of our deaf customers are telling us that they no longer use a TTY. Instead, they are using videophones and text messaging on cellular devices to communicate. Thus, in recognition of changing technologies and the shift from landlines to wireless, TAP launched a wireless pilot program on October 16, 2008. Limited to the first 75 qualifying participants, the pilot made equipment available to deaf and speech-impaired individuals as it offered data service only; no voice service was included in this trial and participants were limited to a choice of two Blackberry devices. Judging from the responses we received from our survey, the pilot program proved successful and made a difference in the participants' lives, with 88 percent responding that the wireless pilot program had made things better for them.

That is TAP's mission: to provide individuals with any disability the needed telecommunication technology to become more independent and productive.

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USDA Honors Marshall, Hamburg FFA Conservation Efforts

Two Arkansas FFA chapters were recently honored by the U.S. Division of Agriculture (USDA) National Resources Conservation as Earth Team Volunteers of the Year.

The Marshall High School FFA chapter won the 2009 Arkansas Earth Team Group Volunteer Award, and the Hamburg High School FFA was honored as the South Area Earth Team Group Volunteer of the Year.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to showcase a couple of very deserving FFA chapters," said Department of Career Education Agricultural Science and Technology Education and Instruction Coordinator Bart Draper. "The efforts of these chapters will benefit their communities for years. Congratulations to both of these chapters, and we encourage more FFA chapters to get involved in this project."

Hamburg High School agriculture instructor David Streeter established an area on the school's campus to plant native Arkansas trees, and 18 students were given a specific tree to locate and transplant on the school campus. The Hamburg USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) Field Office staff assisted the students in proper care and planting of the transplanted seedlings.

The school currently has 44 species of trees planted throughout the campus. Each year, Streeter's forestry class identifies all of the trees on campus and notes what species are not there based on a list of the 112 most common species native to Arkansas.

"Many students who pass through the Hamburg school system can benefit from these centrally located trees," Streeter said. "They'll have a chance to see them grow and mature over the years."

The trees serve as a year-round outdoor classroom.

"Students and teachers can learn to identify these tree varieties during the seasonal changes. They also learn the scientific names, families and orders the trees belong to and their related species," Streeter said. "Other educational benefits will include learning how these trees provide wildlife habitat and food, if the trees can be used for lumber or firewood and how they provide protection from wind and soil erosion and other environmental enhancements."

Streeter's techniques go well beyond traditional classroom learning, say his colleagues.

"Mr. Streeter uses innovative teaching techniques to encourage students to learn. The hands-on approach helps students realize the importance of conserving our natural resources," said Ashley County District Conservationist Bryan Hollis.

Marshall High School was recognized after FFA advisor and agriculture teacher Neal Mays led his chapter in planting Ozark Chinquapin nuts to establish Chinquapin trees around the community.

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Marshall FFA members show off their award.

Marshall agriculture teacher Neal Mays (center); Mark DePoy (right), chief of resource manager for the Buffalo National River, and Marshall FFA members check on Chinquapin seedlings.

Recognizing Our ACE Staff

Little Rock ARS Employees Say Goodbye to Longtime Colleague

Yolanda Evans

A longtime member of the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) staff bid her final farewells to the agency last month. After 21 years at ARS, Yolanda Evans accepted a job with the Department of Workforce Services.

"Yolanda is very deserving of the opportunity before her, and we wish her every success in her new role at Workforce Services," said Department of Career Education Human Resources Manager Pam Harris.

Evans began her work with the state in 1988 and landed her first position at ARS in 1989 as a secretary in the Program, Planning, Development, and Evaluation Section. She held that post until 1994, when she left for a short time to go to work for the North Little Rock School District.

Evans returned to ARS in 1995 to work with the Arkansas Kidney Disease Commission. She was promoted in 1996 to administrative assistant in the Commissioner's Office. Her hard work and ability continued to be recognized as she was named the commissioner's executive assistant in 1998. She became assistant personnel manager in 2001, the job she held until her resignation.

"I want everyone to know that I did my best to treat others the way I wanted to be treated," Evans said on her last day at ARS. "I talked with a coworker from the Jonesboro field office this week, and she made a statement that was very significant and something to remember – 'Attitudes are contagious; would you want to catch yours?'"

Harris said she will especially miss Evans' knowledge of the agency and her ability to serve in many different capacities in Human Resources.

"Yolanda's knowledge of personnel procedures and her ability to recall pertinent historical information about ARS combined to make her an invaluable asset to the agency," Harris said. "Add to that a very likeable personality and an even-tempered approach to even the most exasperating situations, and you might be able to imagine how much she will be missed."

ACTI Names Tracy Price Employee of the Year

Tracy Price, administrative specialist for finance at Arkansas Rehabilitation Services Division's Arkansas Career Training Institute (ACTI), was named ACTI's Employee of the Year 2009 at a recent ceremony held at the facility to honor staff members who have shown dedication and commitment to the agency and its mission. The event also heralded those whose tenure at ACTI covers 15 to 30 years of service.

Price has been with the agency almost four years and was cited during the presentation for her professionalism, eagerness to help out whenever and wherever needed and participation in launching new projects.

Tracy Price

ACTI JAG Members Reopen On-Campus Concession Area

Students at the Arkansas Career Training Institute (ACTI) have a new place to kick up their feet while on campus.

ACTI Jobs for Arkansas's Graduates (JAG) members reopened the school's student union concession stand during a ribbon-cutting ceremony January 26. Snacks and drinks will be sold after class hours.

"We are all very excited about the student union's concession stand reopening because it is a wonderful example of how the JAG program partnered with each department here at ACTI," said ACTI Director of Dietary Services Jane Campbell. "This teamwork demonstrates how we can make a significant impact when we all work together."

The JAG students worked with ACTI faculty and staff for seven months to reopen the concession stand, known as The Eagle's Nest, following frequent requests to the administration and the student council.

JAG President Corey Robinson named Leadership Development Vice President Chris Taylor as the project manager. According to Campbell, Taylor spent "many hours meeting with staff members throughout the center researching and learning skills that will be critical in this new endeavor."

"He made several trips with me out in the community to meet with vendors and potential suppliers," she said.

The Eagle's Nest menu features items not for sale in vending machines, such as candy bars and popcorn. Hours of operation are from 6-8 p.m. Sunday-Tuesday.

The JAG program was formed at ACTI last year and has been responsible for projects such as a food bank and the cleanup and reopening of the institute's rock garden.

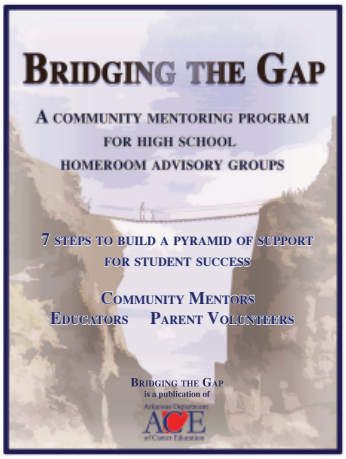
ACTI Administrator Cissy Rucker (right) cuts the ribbon on the newly renovated Eagles' Nest concession stand.

Mentoring Program Manual Now Accessible on National Website

A Department of Career Education manual outlining the successful Mountain Home School District career academy program is now linked as a national resource on the Association of Career and Technical Education website.

The manual, entitled *Bridging the Gap*, is linked at http://www.acteonline.org/careeracademy.aspx and is a suggested reference for information about community mentoring programs at the secondary level.

"We are very proud that this manual is being recognized everywhere and that it came from one of our schools," said John Davidson, deputy director for career and technical education. "The career academies at Mountain Home have received national recognition, and two have received national model status."



The manual outlines seven steps to build a pyramid of support for student success and highlights key components of community mentors, educators and parent volunteers. The Mountain Home career academies connect more than 100 local professionals from a variety of career fields with student groups of approximately 20 students each.

"To bridge the gap," says the manual, "community and business and industry partners can provide students and educators clear information about the workplace, the changes, the expectations and the requisite skills for their future"

"Mountain Home does very good work, and more than anything else, they work very well together to achieve outstanding results," Davidson said.

COACHES *continued from page 1*

basketball standout at the University of Arkansas who also spent time on NFL rosters, is a career coach in Crittenden County, working out of Mid-South Community College in West Memphis.

"What a way to give back to my community," Monk said. "I'm excited about going in, working with the students, and hopefully help change lives and point them in the right direction. I'm looking for big, positive things with this."

Representatives of the Governor's Workforce Cabinet agencies and other education and economic development agencies told the coaches that they have partners throughout the state who stand ready to help.

Zook stressed the importance of career coaches contacting and working with the chambers of commerce in the communities in which they are working, while Dr. Purcell and Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges Director Dr. Ed Franklin outlined the role of the participating two-year colleges. The group heard from representatives from the Department of Education, the Department of Career Education and the Department of Higher Education on topics ranging from the web-based College and Career Planning System powered by Kuder to financial aid and scholarship information.

The placement of the career coaches is the second expansion of Arkansas Works, the governor's strategic initiative to coordinate education, training and economic development in Arkansas communities. The coaches will work with students to help them develop new ideas about themselves, career opportunities and options for education beyond high school.

The coaches will serve students in the following counties: Lafayette, Hempstead, Nevada, Ouachita, Bradley, Jefferson, Chicot, Desha, Phillips, Monroe, Lee, St. Francis, Woodruff, Crittenden, Jackson, Poinsett, Mississippi, Sharp, Stone, Searcy and Newton.

"I am so excited to get started," said LaJuanda Coleman, a career coach working out of Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas in Helena-West Helena. "I am motivated and looking forward to going into the schools and working with the students."

Above: Career coaches pose for a group picture.

Above, photos left to right: ACE Director Bill Walker (left) and Department of Higher Education Director Dr. Jim Purcell chat before their presentations; ACE Associate Director Sonja Wright-Murray responds to questions from Jeremy Reece, career coach supervisor at Mid-South Community College; ACE Associate Director Sandra Porter speaks to the group.

Above, photos left to right: Director Walker (left) and Stacy Sells, senior vice president for Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods, share a light moment; Robert White, director of community education at Southern Arkansas University-Tech, asks a question; ACE Deputy Director John Davidson addresses the coaches; ACE Associate Director Rod Duckworth speaks to the group.

Governor Beebe Proclaims February

(Left) **Future Business Leaders of America** state officers attending, with Governor Beebe and Director Walker: Molly Bennett, District V, Vice President,Riverview HS; Laney Ward, President, Smackover HS; April Stoops, District IV, Vice President, Glen Rose HS.

(Right) **DECA** local chapter officers attending with Governor Beebe and Director Walker: Billy Biggs, Pulaski Oak Grove HS; Breanna Willis, North Pulaski HS; Anthony Turner, Pulaski Oak Grove HS; Makara McDaniel, Little Rock McClellan HS.

(Left) **Health Occupations Students of America** state officers attending with Governor Beebe and Director Walker: Kacie Null, Vice President, Cabot HS; Kayla Jo Pennebaker, Secretary, River Valley Technical Center; Kaleb Bivens, Parliamentarian, Quitman HS; Bethany Ballard, President, Cabot HS; Whitley Blaeuer, Historian, Cabot HS: Katie Howard, Treasurer, Cabot HS; Barbara Dimon, HOSA State Advisor.

(Right) **SkillsUSA Secondary** state officers attending, with Governor Beebe and Director Walker: Front Row: Relda Stelman, Officer Advisor, SAU Tech; Faith Blair, Cabot HS; Trisha Patrick, Fayetteville HS; Suellen Nichols, Fordyce HS.
Back Row: Jeff Parks, SkillsUSA State Advisor; Juan Zermno, Springdale HS; Benny Luna, Springdale HS; Tyler Tully, Cave City HS.

Career & Technical Education Month

(Right) **Family, Career & Community Leaders of America** state officers attending, with Governor Beebe and Director Walker: Molly Freel, Parlliamentarian, Nashville HS; Tristin Dean, Treasurer, Alma HS; Sarah Bean, President, Murfreesboro HS; Brittany Webb, Vice President of Programs, Jonesboro HS; Shayna Whiteside, Secretary, Pine Bluff HS.

(Left) **FFA** state officers attending with Governor Beebe and Director Walker: Bart Draper, FFA Advisor; Tyler Rainwater, Vice President, Ozark HS; Mike Norton, President, Lincoln HS; Nicole Foster, Reporter, Piggott HS; State Representative Bruce Maloch of Magnolia; Marion Fletcher, State FFA Advisor.

(*Right*) **Phi Beta Lambda** state officers attending with Governor Beebe and Director Walker: Derrick Cornell, Director of State Programs, North Arkansas College; Charlie Passmore, Secretary-Treasurer, UA Community College - Morrilton.

(Right) **SkillsUSA Postsecondary** state officers attending with Governor Beebe and Director Walker: Front Row: Jeff Parks, SkillsUSA State Advisor; Nick Yarberry, Pulaski Technical College; Nickiles Mathews, Pulaski Technical College; Kayla Skinner, Pulaski Technical College; Audra Hulin, Ouachita Technical College. Back Row: AR State Representative Mike Burris of Malvern; Niki Mitchell, Ouachita Technical College; Tyler Porterfield, Ouachita Technical College; Andrew Chapman, Northwest Technical Institute; Kelcey Stewart, Ouachita Technical College; Sue Burris, Officer Advisor, National Park Community College.

ARS Conducts Needs Survey to Better Serve Clients

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) held a focus group meeting February 19 as part of the process for completing the Comprehensive Needs Survey. The purpose of the survey is to identify methods of enhancing service to ARS consumers.

"The survey is a required function of each Designated State Unit under the terms of the federal Rehabilitation Act," ARS Commissioner Robert Treviño said. "Every three years, each state is required to conduct a statewide needs assessment."

Representatives from organizations that serve Arkansans with disabilities attended the meeting, which included a roundtable discussion on the issues facing people with disabilities. Transportation challenges people with disabilities regularly face and continuing to meet the needs of young adults were two of the many issues discussed.

ARS was represented by Governor's Commission on People with Disabilities Executive Director Leonard Boyle; Program, Planning, Development, and Evaluation Director Randy Parker; Business Relations Manager Rodney Chandler; Transition Services Director Judy Smith; Arkansas Career Training Institute Administrator Cissy Rucker; and Chief of Field Services Carl Daughtery.

Treviño and Department of Career Education Director William L. "Bill" Walker, Jr., also addressed the group.

"ARS has contracted with Dan Hopkins and Associates to assist the agency in our effort to carry out the survey," Commissioner Treviño said. "Key stakeholders provided significant input during the meeting to inaugurate the process."

Dan Hopkins (center) of Dan Hopkins & Associates speaks to the focus group at the Comprehensive Needs Assessment meeting.

State Advisors meet with Governor on CTSO Proclamation Day

Pictured left-right: Deputy Director for Communications Deborah Germany; Director Bill Walker; State DECA Advisor Jim Brock; CTE Transportation Education Supervisor Ray Winiecki; FFA Advisor Chris Bacchus; Associate Director for Workforce Training Sandra Porter; State SkillsUSA Advisor Jeff Parks; Governor Mike Beebe; Deputy Director for CTE John Davidson; DECA Advisor Ginger Fisher; FFA Advisor Bart Draper; FFA State Advisor Marion Fletcher; State FBLA/PBL Advisor Peggy Wakefield; Associate Director for CTE Rod Duckworth; State FCCLA Advisor Suellen Ward; FCCLA Advisor Suzanne Jones; FCCLA Advisor Susan Prater.

(see pages 10-11 for student photos)

Federal Dollars Earmarked for Green Job Training in Arkansas to Aid Apprenticeship Program

A **$4.9 million federal grant for green jobs training for Arkansas will** directly benefit the Department of Career Education's Apprenticeship Program.

"The funds budgeted for apprenticeship are approximately $300,000," said Apprenticeship Program Manager Jonathan Bibb. "These funds will be used to purchase a mobile green technology training trailer as well as [pay for] instructor training to incorporate LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certifications."

The Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) **Mobile Green Classroom** is packed with the latest cutting-edge technologies to provide hands-on learning opportunities to promote more sustainable mechanical service and construction.

The training trailer is the ultimate educational tool for going green and demonstrates new and innovative technologies that will enhance a building's energy efficiency while maintaining the health, safety and comfort of its occupants. The trailer also provides supplemental hands-on training opportunities from the Mechanical Contractors Association of America's LEED training programs and the United Association/Mechanical Service Contractors of America's Green Awareness Training and Certification Program.

"This is an outstanding example of some of the benefits that are occurring as a result of the formation of the Arkansas Apprenticeship Coalition and the collaboration between the Department of Workforce Services and Registered Apprenticeship," Bibb said.

In a news release issued by Senators Blanche Lincoln and Mark Pryor and Representatives Marion Berry, Vic Snyder and Mike Ross, it was announced that the funds are part of $190 million green job training program from the U.S. Department of Labor. The financing will go toward college and apprenticeship programs that will prepare 2,800 participants for careers in the emerging green industries.

"We will keep our state competitive by ensuring that Arkansans have the necessary skills to take on new challenges in green technology," Sen. Lincoln said. "I am fully committed to getting Arkansans back to work and the economy back on track."

Four counties with a significant auto industry presence – Cleburne, Desha, Greene and Logan – will receive a portion of the funding, which will be dispersed statewide. The money will ultimately create three Energy Centers of Excellence that will set up programs and provide materials for 22 Arkansas two-year colleges and seven apprenticeship programs in addition to high school programs and other training workshops."

A mobile classroom lab will take the latest in green technologies to students across the state.

Cabot High School Achieves Project Lead the Way Certification

Cabot High School has received national certification for its Project Lead the Way (PLTW) program. Cabot has offered PLTW since 2003.

"We've seen how the PLTW program draws more students to engineering and technology courses and gets them thinking about college and their careers," said Cabot High School Principal Zanya Clarkson. "We are extremely proud to be PLTW certified and ecstatic that our students can begin receiving college credit for certain PLTW courses."

PLTW is a national, nonprofit organization that provides a rigorous and innovative science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) curriculum for middle and high schools. The PLTW curriculum is developed collaboratively by PLTW teachers, university educators, engineering and biomedical professionals and school administrators. The curriculum is hands-on and project-based, emphasizing critical thinking, creativity, innovation and real-world problem solving.

Cabot High School teacher Linda Powell checks out student work.

The primary purposes of the PLTW certification process are to recognize schools that have successfully demonstrated a commitment to the quality national standards of the Pathway to Engineering program and to provide an opportunity for students to apply for college credit at PLTW-affiliate universities for selected PLTW courses. PLTW has more than 35 affiliate college and university partners that offer students credit for completing certain PLTW courses in high school, including Arkansas Tech University in Russellville.

"The beauty of PLTW courses is that our kids get to experience how a formula they learned in math applies to a real project," Clarkson said. "In class, there are no lectures – kids are building, developing and creating. That is the kind of hands-on experience that will engage more students in fields that they might otherwise never consider."

Clarkson and a team of teachers, staff, students and members of the community completed a self-assessment of Cabot High School's Pathway to Engineering™ program, and a national PLTW certification specialist made a site visit to the school.

"Cabot High School has demonstrated its com-

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FFA *continued from page 6*

"The National Park Service, NRCS and Earth Team volunteers in the Marshall FFA chapter are working toward restoring this tree to its original standing in our forests," Mays said.

The Ozark Chinquapin was once a dominant tree in north Arkansas forests but now usually grows to be no larger than a shrub before it dies from Chinese Chestnut Blight, which reached the Ozark Mountains in the 1940s. By the end of the 1950s, there remained few Chinquapin trees large enough to produce nuts.

Chinquapins are high in protein and energy and are a favorite food source for many wildlife species. When Arkansas was being settled, numerous families survived on Chinquapin nuts. They were ground into flour, used for puddings and fed to livestock. Even the wood is useful. Due to its resistance to rot, it is common to find remains of Chinquapin trees that died more than 50 years ago in Ozark Mountain forests. It is also said that the Chinquapin tree was used from cradle to grave – as a baby crib and a coffin.

Because of the Chinquapin tree's attributes, Mark DePoy, chief of resource management for the Buffalo National River, became interested in restoring the trees in Ozark forests. He contacted Brent Clark, the NRSC district conservationist in Marshall, and Mays. The three went to work propagating Chinquapin trees in the high school greenhouse.

"The goal of the project is to sprout these nuts and allow the seedlings to grow for a couple of years," Mays said. "They will then be infected with the blight, and if there are survivors, these could become seed stock for a breeding program of blight-resistant Ozark Chinquapins. Perhaps once again these trees will be a major component of the Ozarks forest ecosystem."

ACTI Happenings

ACTI Kicks Off Nationally Accredited Graphics Communications Program

On February 1, nine Arkansas Career Training Institute (ACTI) students became the first class to start the center's newly accredited graphic communications program. The program recently earned accreditation thorugh the Graphic Arts Education and Research Federation (GAERF).

The graphic communications program combines five existing printing-oriented focus areas into one field so that students can earn national certification. The graphic communications program includes training in offset press, bindery, digital file preparation, digital file output and digital graphic communication. Instructor Tom Kennedy says the certification will open more doors for graduates.

Don Thomas (left) and Jermaine Whitmore transferred from traditional printing into the graphic communications program February 1.

"Students can already receive certification from ACTI in each discipline, and employers in Arkansas will be familiar with ACTI. That will give the students a good base," Kennedy said. "Employers nationwide will immediately recognize GAERF. That means more money and a good sound base in the industry anywhere the students go in the country."

Eight of the nine students who are beginning the graphic communications program have already gained some experience in one of ACTI's traditional press programs, which generally take one year to complete. The graphic communications is expected to take 18 months to complete. Don Thomas of Booneville transferred from his offset press studies into the new discipline.

"It just makes sense to transfer," Thomas said. "I already have some of the skills. I figure I'll just be building on what I already have and making myself more marketable wherever I go."

Instructor Ralph Forbes says that the graphic communications program has 358 competencies to teach, and students like Thomas are taking advantage of their experience. Forbes and Kennedy are making adjustments for students with experience so they'll be able to use that experience as an edge in their training, as well as to expedite their graduation.

According to Forbes, the graphic communications program is designed to provide students the skills they need so that they have good chances of finding the jobs they're looking for in their chosen career field.

"This new program will work well in giving a good overview of the entire process," Forbes said. "It's intended to teach our students the basics of graphics communications and then take them to the intermediate level."

Electronic imaging instructor Tom Kennedy (left) and printing instructor Ralph Forbes oversee the department's projects.

PLTW *continued from page 14*

mitment to the quality standards of PLTW's Pathway to Engineering program, and the real winners are Cabot's students," said PLTW President and CEO John Lock. "Students are benefitting from an innovative curriculum that encourages creativity and critical thinking – and on top of that, they can earn college credit for some of these courses. We congratulate the entire Cabot community and look forward to many more years of working together to prepare the Cabot students to become the most innovative and productive in the world."

Cabot High School principal Zanya Clarkson with digtal electronics student Garry Newman and an engineering project.

John Davidson
Named Pygmalion Commission Chair

John Davidson

John Davidson, deputy director for career and technical education, has been named chair of the Arkansas Pygmalion Commission on Nontraditional Education. Davidson has been a member of the Commission since its inception in 1993.

"It's an honor to be recognized by your peers," Davidson said. "The entire commission works very well together to see that things are better for kids who attend alternative learning schools."

Davidson was first appointed to the Commission in 1993 by Governor Jim Guy Tucker. He was reappointed by Governor Mike Huckabee and once again by Governor Mike Beebe.

"I spent part of my career working at an alternative school, and prior to coming to ACE was appointed to the Commission to represent high school principals," Davidson said.

The Commission was created by Act 1288 of the Arkansas General Assembly of 1993 in order to support Act 1287, which mandated that all school districts must provide an alternative learning environment (ALE), to meet the educational needs of at-risk students across the state. The legislation was spearheaded by former state Representative Carolyn Pollan of Fort Smith.

The 16-member commission serves as a clearinghouse for information regarding alternative learning environments, seeks to focus public attention on ALEs and student needs and works to ensure that curriculum, instructional approaches, school climate and organization address the needs of students in alternative education programs.

"We are extemely proud of John and delighted that he has been chosen to chair the Pygmalion Commission," said ACE Director Bill Walker. "John has long demonstrated his dedication to Arkansas's students and a special commitment to meeting the needs of those who need an alternative to the traditional classroom."

ALMA *continued from page 3*

hands-on experiences in all aspects of marketing. Students design many of the t-shirts and hoodies the store sells, listen to sales pitches from merchandisers, create window displays and come up with marketing plans. They also work the registers, as well as debit/credit machines.

Recently, the hottest selling items at Aire-Looms were pink. Aire-Looms sold apparel for the Madelyn Flenor Pink Zone basketball game against the Morrilton Devil Dogs. Coach Madelyn Flenor, who leads the girls' basketball team, is battling cancer for the second time.

White said the store has been quite an endeavor.

"In Arkansas, most student-enterprise stores sell candy," White said. "Apparel-wise, there are not many. We're pretty much the only complete retail store."

Alma DECA students get hands-on retail experience in Aire-Looms.

DIRECTOR *continued from page 2*

grown its longtime home at 1616 Brookwood Drive in Little Rock and is moving, along with some ACE staffers from 3 Capitol Mall, into new surroundings at 525 West Capitol in downtown Little Rock. The new site offers additional space and the centralized location we need, along with a more up-to-date working environment thanks to extensive renovations.

The move is just another building block in improving the services we offer to our clients by providing a more spacious, comfortable and modern working and service environment. It's a huge step forward for the Department of Career Education itself, as the agency continues to move forward in offering the best assistance available to those who use our services.

As we carry on into 2010, we will continue to build on the firm and steady foundation we laid during the previous year. The work will be difficult, but if we keep our goal in mind, it will be rewarding. We have provided ourselves with the tools we need to make our work go smoothly – career coaches, qualified and capable new board members, and a new location. Now it's time to roll up our sleeves, get our hands dirty and keep building.

Jonesboro Mayor Harold Perrin (center) signs proclamation declaring the week of February 1 - 5, 2010, Family, Career & Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) **Week. Student participants represent area FCCLA chapters from Annie Camp, Jonesboro, Nettleton, and Valley View schools.**

National GED Examiners Say Arkansas on the Right Path

National General Educational Development (GED) officials say they're impressed with Arkansas's state testing operation from top to bottom.

GED Testing Service leadership team members Kati Niemi and Brian Jenkins made visits to testing centers at Ouachita Technical College Adult Education Center in Malvern and National Park Community College in Hot Springs February 24. Niemi and Jenkins lauded Arkansas GED Program Manager Janice Hanlon, along with local testing administrators, for the state's successful pass rate which is among the highest in the nation.

National GED examiners Brian Jenkins (far left) and Kati Niemi (third from left), pose with state GED Program Manager Janice Hanlon and ACE Director Bill Walker.

"Arkansas requires GED test-takers to pass a pretest before moving on to the actual test; that way both the students and the administrators know that the student is prepared to take the test," Hanlon said. "Making sure the students are prepared and assured that they can pass really accounts for Arkansas's success on the GED. Arkansas is using the GED as a tool to upgrade its workforce and we'd like to see 49 other states do that."

There is no fee to take the GED in Arkansas. That makes Arkansas one of only two states in the union that allows students to take the test for free.

"Some states charge as much as $175 to take the test," Jenkins said. "In New York, there's an 18-month waiting list to take it. Students there are traveling to Georgia for a GED test because there's no residency requirement. Arkansas has a lot to be proud of because there are very few obstacles to earning a GED here."

Jenkins and Niemi are touring the country to collect data for a new test that could be used as soon as 2013 according to Jenkins.

Sandra Porter
Associate Director
Workforce Training
Career and Technical Education

Senior Management Team

SMT Update

The Workforce Training Section of Arkansas Department of Career Education (ACE) was asked by the Arkansas Department of Education to write a project or projects to be included in the **Race to the Top (R2T) grant**. *The Race to the Top is a competition among states for $4.35 billion in grants that encourage educational reforms in four areas –* Common Standards and Assessments, Data Systems to Support Instruction, Great Teachers and Leaders, *and* Turning Around Struggling Schools. Arkansas has been identified as a "competitive" state in the Race to the Top grant process.

The two projects submitted by ACE were for expansions of the state's system of college-based secondary area technical centers and Jobs for Arkansas's Graduates (JAG). These projects were chosen to address the vertical alignment at each point in the education system where a transition occurs (e.g., between K-12 and postsecondary careers) to ensure that students exiting one level are prepared for success, without remediation, in the next.

College-Based Secondary Area Technical Centers

Arkansas must fully embrace college and work-readiness as one and the same. We must understand that we will lose a generation of students who won't understand that their participation in the workplace is viable to the nation's economic stability if we do not focus on the application of academics to business and industry.

One way that Arkansas has made a priority of preparing our students for the workplace is through our secondary technical centers. Sponsored by two-year colleges, 15 secondary area career centers offer career and technical education (CTE) programs to high school students within a 25-mile radius of the secondary career center. Each center draws students from several high schools, enabling students to access high-cost programs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) cluster areas such as pre-engineering, advanced manufacturing and bio-fuels.

These college centers provide the postsecondary opportunities and connections that students would not have in their local schools. However, while Arkansas has done a great job of providing CTE opportunities, students at 67 high schools still do not have access to an area technical center due to high startup expenses for the two-year colleges.

College centers offer a system which provides a seamless transition for students from high school to postsecondary education. This partnership between secondary and postsecondary educational institutions allows students at these centers to earn both college and high school credit for the courses they take at no charge to the student. According to a recent U.S. Department of Education report on student success in college, earning some college credit while in high school is a positive factor for college graduation (Hoover, 2006, p. A1). Last year 4,250 students enrolled Arkansas technical centers and in earned 28,230 hours of college concurrent credit in career and technical education courses.

In addition to the 15 college centers, there are nine centers operated by school districts. These centers provide a strong industry-based curriculum, and many offer industry certifications and STEM-based instruction. However, in most cases, these district-based centers do not provide the added benefit of concurrent college credit.

Our goal is to increase the opportunities for concurrent credit in our nine existing district centers and to open college centers in the seven community-college areas not presently serving the 67 high schools mentioned above. These sites include the Hope, Ozark, Mountain Home, Melbourne, Pocahontas, Newport and Batesville areas.

The anticipated annual budget for these vital school improvement activities would be approximately $25,000 each for the nine existing district-based centers to strengthen college partnerships and approxi-

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PORTER *continued from page 18*

mately $400,000 each to establish the seven new college-based career centers for a total grant proposal of approximately $6 million.

Job for Arkansas's Graduates

The mission of Jobs for Arkansas's Graduates is to teach literacy and job readiness skills to high-need youth and to increase the ability of those young people to earn a high school diploma and immediately enter the labor market or a postsecondary institution.

The Arkansas Department of Education has identified 12 high priority schools (middle schools and high schools) with student populations facing multiple barriers to success; these barriers may be personal, academic or employment-related.

The lack of trained employees in the state of Arkansas was once cited by Toyota Motor Company as one of the deciding factors for not opening a Toyota plant in Arkansas. Developing a JAG network for middle and high school students who are identified as high-need will provide potential employers such as Toyota a pool of employees trained in both academics and job skills. The JAG curriculum directly addresses industry needs by placing students on actual job sites and following the graduates one year after graduation to assess their progress in their new environment.

The inability of some school districts, because of funding constraints, to hire JAG specialists (certified teachers) is one focus of this proposal, but more importantly, the sense of urgency within the state to prepare Arkansas's young adults for today's job market is the primary focus of this proposal.

The anticipated annual budget for implementing JAG programs in 12 high-priority schools would be approximately $1.7 million for a total grant proposal of approximately $3 million.

Both projects were submitted to the Arkansas Department of Education and included in the Race to the Top grant submitted to the U. S. Department of Education in January of 2010. The first award will be announced in April of 2010. If Arkansas is named as a recipient of the Race to the Top grant, the implementation of these projects will significantly move career and technical education in the state of Arkansas to a new level of excellence.

Hoover, E. (2006). Study finds school-college "disconnect" in curricula. The Chronicle of Higher Education, 52(25), pp. A1-A3. Retrieved March 5, 2008, from Education Research Complete (19905155).

12th Annual
Youth Leadership Forum!

When: **July 12 - 16, 2010**

Where: **University of Central Arkansas/Conway**

What: **YLF is a week-long conference for high school seniors with disabilities.** A variety of topics are covered during the week, including transition, leadership, time management, independent living skills, disability rights, developing relationships and networking. Other highlights of the week typically include an opportunity to meet the Governor at the State Capitol, a tour of the Clinton Library and several social activities.

How: **Applications are now being accepted** and are accessible at www.arsinfo.org.
Go to the YLF page and follow the prompt to download the application.
Deadline for applications is April 30, 2010.

If you have any questions or need a special formatted application (Braille or large print), contact Carl Enna at 1-800-330-0632 or e-mail carl.enna@arkansas.gov.

The YLF application process is competitive. There are a limited number of slots each year. There is no cost for those chosen to attend YLF.

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