



the

Career Counselor



A publication of Arkansas Department of Career Education
501-682-1500 * <http://ace.arkansas.gov>

Career Coaches and Students Participate in First Ever Arkansas Works Legislative Day

Celebrating a year of success, high school students and career coaches representing the 21 Arkansas Works counties descended upon the Capitol on March 1.

Their goal was to personally relay to legislators the value of the Arkansas Works Initiative, which has three components: -the Internet-based Arkansas College and Career Planning System powered by Kuder; the College and Career Coaches Program, which placed coaches in 21 of Arkansas's most economically challenged counties to help students with career planning; and the ACT Academy Program, which offers

students in the 21 counties an intensive ACT-preparation program to help them raise their ACT scores.

In first announcing the Arkansas Works Initiative at the fall 2008 Governor's Summit on Education and Economic Development, Governor Mike Beebe said Arkansas must "develop immediate and long-term strategies recognizing that our fastest growing job require job training and educational opportunities beyond high school." Arkansas Works was rolled out in November 2009 with the expansion of the College and Career Planning



Governor Beebe speaks to career coaches as ACE Director Walker looks on.

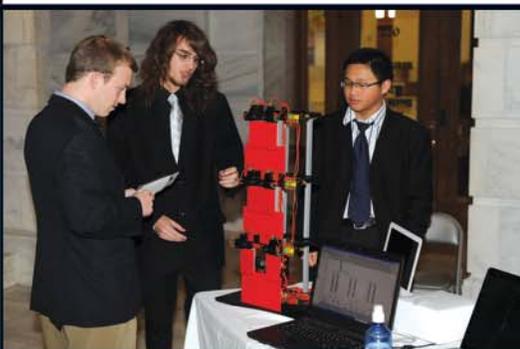
System. In January 2010, the College and Career Coaches Program became a reality, and in the summer of 2010, the first ACT Academy was held.

"It's important for the legislators to see first-hand and hear from students about the impact of the initiative on them and their future," said Sonja Wright-McMurray, the Department of Career Education's associate director for Arkansas Works.

The program has indeed had an impact. In the counties served, over 99 percent of seniors were contacted at least once by a career coach. The summer and school-year ACT academies are increasing ACT scores of students and helping many test out of remediation; more than half of those participating in the first academies scored a 19 or higher and thus will not be required to take remedial courses in college.

An impressive statistic shows the impact of direct student intervention in the targeted counties: in counties with no career coach, college financial aid applications are up 63 percent; in those counties with career coaches, applications are up

CTSO Students Demonstrate the Value of Career and Technical Education



Russellville High School *Project Lead-the-Way* students Parker Dew (left), Justin Vick (center) and Jian Zhang (right) demonstrate their working elevator model and controller.

"I never realized how much goes into operating a business until I got involved in this coffee shop at school," said Amber Hensley, a senior at Harrison High School.

Hensley and fellow DECA member Jason Johnson manned a display about their coffee-shop project at Arkansas Capitol rotunda on February 22. They were there with other students from around the state representing all of

the state's career and technical student organizations (CTSOs). The purpose of the Capitol visit and displays was to interact with legislators

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Director's Update

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

ACE Tells Its Story at the State Capitol and Across the State

January and February were busy months at the Department of Career Education (ACE). With the Arkansas General Assembly convening in January, we focused on "telling our story" to legislators and others. You can read about many of our special events in this issue of the *Career Counselor*.

I was particularly proud of our career and technical student organization (CTSO) student leaders, who worked so hard to make CTSO Day at the Capitol such a success. I know that our legislators and everyone who visited with our students came away impressed by these leaders of tomorrow.

The first-ever Arkansas Works Legislative Luncheon also featured students from the 21 Arkansas Works counties, who visited with legislators to share what Arkansas Works and career coaches have meant to them.

Another very successful event was the Adult Education Legislative Luncheon, which provided our adult education administrators the opportunity to visit with their legislators. The luncheon was well-attended, thanks to the efforts of administrators, who extended personal invitations to their legislators.

As we move into March, we are continuing our efforts to let people know what ACE is all about. Later in March, we will be visiting the Helena-West Helena area to hold the

second of our community forums to let residents learn about services available through ACE. The Arkansas Rehabilitation Services Division, along with the Adult Education and the Career and Technical Education divisions, will participate in the community forum. This forum was rescheduled for March due to inclement weather in February, which forced postponement of the event.

Report Calls for National Effort to Get Millions Of Young Americans onto a Realistic Path to Employability

I would like to call your attention to a recent report that has implications for our state and our nation. In February, The Pathways to Prosperity Project, based at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, released a major report, *Pathways to Prosperity: Meeting the Challenge of Preparing Young Americans for the 21st Century*, examining the reasons for our nation's failure to prepare so many young adults for adulthood and the workplace. The report further presents an exciting vision for how the United States might regain the leadership in educational attainment it held for over a century.

The report notes that despite years of education reform and billions in expenditures, the harsh re-

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Arkansas Department
ACE
of Career Education



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

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Arkansas Works Focus Groups Aim to Extend Program's Reach

College and career coaches from the Arkansas Works initiative conducted focus groups January 4 and 6 at Barton-Lexa and Hope high schools to learn how to better serve the students and extend the program's reach.

"The focus groups were designed to gather information from both coaches and students to help the coaches do their jobs better and to help the students get more attuned to college," said Arkansas Works Associate Director Sonja Wright-McMurray.

The information gathered from the focus groups will be the beginning pieces used for the College Access Challenge Grant from the U.S. Department of Education, which is aimed at making American high school students more college-ready.

In their focus group, college and career coaches discussed using technologies already popular with high schoolers (the Internet, social networking websites, podcasts, mp3s, etc.) to encourage students to go to college and spread the message about Arkansas Works.

Many coaches admitted that there were some specifically personal problems that could only be solved by one-on-one interaction.

"Most of these kids are poor. They have no college culture or education culture," said career coach Jeff Robinette. "[There] has to be something that excites them about college on a regular basis – not just on an after-school basis."

On top of the widespread issue of poverty, a lack of parental involvement in many of the students' homes and cultural differences among Hispanic students were named as leading concerns.

"Some students don't see anything in their futures," said career coach Lindsey Hughey. "If their parents don't value education, they don't value education. College and career plans are influenced by peers and parents if at all, but few have made concrete plans."

Hispanic students were said to experience culture shock.

"The entire world in Spanish is doubly hard," said Maria Elena deAvila, the Arkansas Works career coach who works with Hispanic populations. "[Hispanic families] don't understand the education system, and most are low income. For them we

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a staggering 92 percent.

“Right now we’re operating on a three-year grant and we have two years left. That’s ‘soft money.’ Our goal is to impress upon legislators the importance of funding the program with ‘hard money’ which would be written into legislation,” Wright-McMurray summarized, as she described the motivation for the day’s Capitol visit.

Temeke Butler and Neatrice Strickland are career coaches based at Southern Arkansas University in Monticello. Together they serve the school districts in Ouachita County and are responsible for targeting students who need extra help in preparing for a career or going to college.

“Just because a kid doesn’t have a 3.9 grade average doesn’t mean they can’t be successful,” says Butler.

“We help expose students to all their career options, not just vocational education, but whether they should consider going into the military, getting a certification through Workforce Services, going to college or going straight to work after high school. They need to know what’s out there, what they are suited for and what’s best for their future,” Butler summarized.

The two students with Butler and Strickland were excited to be at the Capitol, not just because they got a day off from school but because they are proud of what they’re learning through the program.

Students and counselors were recognized at the morning meeting of the House Education Committee and then hosted a luncheon for their legislators at the nearby Capitol Hill Building.

The luncheon was well attended by legislators and members of the Governor’s Workforce Cabinet, along with leadership from ACE. Arkansas Works has from the beginning been a partnership effort of the Workforce Cabinet, comprised of the Department of Career Education, the Department of Education, the Department of Higher Education, the Department of Workforce Ser-



Speaker of the House Robert Moore, Jr., (left) learns more about the career coaches program from ACE Associate Director for Arkansas Works Sonja Wright-McMurray and Director Bill Walker.

vices (the funding agency), the Arkansas Economic Development Commission and the Arkansas Science and Technology Authority. Additional partners include the Arkansas Association of Two-Year College and the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce. Artee Williams, director of the Department of Workforce Services; Dr. Tom Kimbrell, director of the Department of Education; Shane Broadway, interim director of the Department of Higher Education; and Dr. Ed Franklin, executive director of the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges, along with ACE Director Bill Walker provided remarks at the luncheon, praising students and coaches for their success.

In addition to students and coaches sharing lunch and visiting one-on-one with legislators from their home district, attendees were treated to remarks by Arkansas Works student Stanton Davis from the Barton-Lexa school district. Career coach Lori Sullivan also shared her perspective on the program and what it means to students and Arkansas’s future. Sullivan serves the Mountain View and Timbo school districts and is employed by Ozarka College.

Director Walker concluded the lunchtime remarks by emphasizing the mantra of the Arkansas Works program: “Students cannot be what they cannot see.’ However, these students here today have taken the first step toward a successful future. With the help of their coaches and Arkansas Works, they have made career plans and are now working those plans. We want to empower every student and worker in Arkansas with this same opportunity. “

A highlight of the afternoon was the opportunity to meet Governor Beebe. The students and coaches had their



Governor Beebe meets with students and Arkansas Works staffers.

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Adult Education Team Visits with Legislators

Secondary education and higher education attract a lot of attention in Arkansas, and well they should. But what about educating Arkansans who find themselves outside traditional paths through high school and college? That's where adult education steps in.

More than 31,000 students were enrolled in adult education centers throughout Arkansas in 2009-2010. 42 percent of those who enrolled in adult literacy education were between 25 and 44 years old. Clearly there's a need for adult education in Arkansas to continue and to grow.

On February 23, representatives of the statewide adult education program focused on teaching a very different population – Arkansas's legislators.

The dining area of the Capitol Hill apartments, a residence on the Capitol grounds where many legislators live during the week, served perfectly as the backdrop for this educational opportunity. Directors and teachers from Arkansas's adult education centers met and visited with nine senators, 29 representatives and 41 legislative staff members, telling them the impact adult education has on the communities they serve.

Sheri Rogers, Clark County adult education director, explained the situation facing workers in the Arkadelphia area, saying, "We've seen an increased interest in our programs because manufacturing plants are



Representative Stephen Meeks and Becky Linsky, director of adult education at National Park Community College in Hot Springs, share ideas.



Director Walker greets Senators Jimmy Jeffress (left) and Gene Jeffress.

closing in the area. There are no other jobs for many of those workers. It's such a big issue that we're helping conduct public meetings this week and next, where we'll explain

to dislocated workers the services we provide at our center. We've found many people don't know we offer GED testing and preparation, computer classes, literacy classes and so on. We want to help them get in a better position to find a job."

"There are thousands of success stories out there," said Jim Smith, deputy director of the Department of Career Education (ACE) Adult Education Division. "We have table-top displays all around here today that tell those stories. We want our lawmakers to know that the support they give us from the Capitol level has a direct impact at the personal level for each student."

Smith cites two statistics that illustrate the earned income value of adults who earn a GED and of those who take some college classes, even if they don't eventually earn a degree:

- A high school graduate or person with a GED diploma earns an average of \$8,860 more per year than a non-graduate.
- Individuals with some college education earn \$4,290 more per year than high school graduates.

Considering that 7,539 adult education students earned their Arkansas High School Diploma through the GED program in 2010, that's a marked increase in available income for those families, which improves their quality of life and the quality of workforce available in Arkansas.

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photos taken with the governor, and he also took a few minutes to address the group. The governor praised the work being done by the students and coaches, saying he was proud of how the Arkansas Works program has progressed in such a short time. He encouraged the students to seize the opportunities they have to better themselves and to better the state.

"Arkansas is being recognized across the nation for all of the good work we're doing in pre-K and K-12 education," said Gov. Beebe. "But we still need more Arkansans who are college-ready, who hold a college degree, and who are career-ready. What you as college and career coaches are doing is improving our state educationally and economically."

AGENCY HEADLINERS



David McDonald

Sherry Hollingshead

Gaye Jones-Washington

Jonathan Bibb

Trenia Miles

We would like to acknowledge the following ACE individuals who have received promotions or recently joined our staff.

Promotion to District Manager:

David McDonald. McDonald is a 15-year veteran of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS). His first assignment was with the Deaf Outreach Center as a mental health counselor for the deaf and hard of hearing. He has also worked with staff development and most recently as the administrator of the Office of the Deaf and Hearing Impaired. Originally from Arkansas, he earned a master's degree in counseling from the University of Central Arkansas. He taught and worked as a mental health counselor at the Florida School for the Deaf.

Promotion to District Manager:

Sherry Hollingshead. Hollingshead is a 2005 graduate from the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith with a bachelor's degree in psychology and rhetoric. A back injury and surgeries during her last year there led her to focus on the process of recovery for individuals with significant injuries. She received her master's degree in rehabilitation counseling from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville in 2007 and has worked as a vocational rehabilitation counselor

for ARS since September of that year. Fort Smith is home, and while many may know her by her maiden name (Muck), she explains that in January "I married the love of my life, Walter [Hollingshead]."

Promotion to District Manager:

Gaye Jones-Washington. A native of Little Rock, Jones-Washington has been with ARS for five years as a rehabilitation counselor. She holds a master of arts in counseling with an emphasis in rehabilitation from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Interested in the field because it merged both counseling and job placement, she previously worked with individuals with disabilities at Little Rock Community Mental Health and Arkansas Counseling.

Promotion to Interim Administrator at the Arkansas Career Training Institute:

Jonathan Bibb. Bibb earned a bachelor of science degree in radiology from the University of Central Arkansas in 1995 and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in 2002. He is a registered radiologic technologist and a graduate of the Arkansas Academy for Public Health Leadership. Prior to his recent promotion, Bibb was the apprenticeship program manager for ACE. Bibb's first job in state gov-

ernment was as administrator for the Mammography Accreditation and Compliance Program at the Arkansas Department of Health, a position he held for seven years.

New Associate Director of Adult Education:

Dr. Trenia Miles. A native of Pine Bluff, Miles comes to ACE from Mid-South Community College, where she served as director of retention services and program coordinator for college study and survival skills and was responsible for coordinating the development, implementation and evaluation of First Year Experience (FYE) course and support services. Among other duties, she oversaw faculty training and development for FYE courses, academic advising for first-year students, academic coaching, structured learning assistance (SLA), career services and disability services. She holds a bachelor's in psychology and a master's in counseling from the University of Arkansas and a doctorate in higher and adult education, with a concentration in adult education, from the University of Memphis. In her new position, she will assist in meeting the accountability requirements of the state and federal governments and providing a means to offer a rewarding adult education program for Arkansas's adult population.

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and relay the impact career and technical education (CTE) has had them and their view of the future.

The DECA chapter at Harrison High School conceived and executes a real-life business management experience through a school-based coffee shop called "DECA's House of Grounds." The store serves smoothies, teas and coffee-based drinks plus basic school supplies. The store is open an hour before school and during after-school activities and sporting events.

"Working at the coffee shop has given me real work experience while in high school. I'm more confident now, not only because I have to interact with other students, but also with parents and people from the community who come to our store," Johnson said.

Other booths surrounding the Capitol rotunda that day featured student demonstrations of skills learned through organizations such as Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA), Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), SkillsUSA; FFA, (formerly Future Farmers of America); and Family, Career, and Community of America (FCCLA). Project Lead the Way and Jobs for Arkansas's Graduates (JAG).

Visitors to the FFA booth learned from FFA members that the skills taught by the FFA of today reach beyond just those needed for farming.

Caleb Dickerson from Lamar was awarded a state and national grant for his agricultural entrepreneurship project in 2010. The project, "Therapy with Legs," provides the opportunity for children with learning disabilities to interact with animals from the chapter's farm. Dickerson noticed a significant behavioral change when a student from a local development center interacted with the farm animals. Further research revealed that animal therapy had indeed been elsewhere documented as an effective therapy for children with challenges. Dickerson said he's inspired to consider animal therapy as a career choice and is grateful for FFA for helping him discover this path.

Rotunda passersby couldn't help but be attracted to a working model of a commercial elevator and its control system being demonstrated by Justin Vic, Parker Dew and Jian Zhang of Russellville

High School. The team project was required as part of their participation in the Project Lead the Way (PTLW) curriculum. PTLW helps students develop skills in science, technology, math and engineering.

Legislators and those visiting the capitol that day were also treated to the following demonstrations by other CTSOs:

- ★ Blood pressure screenings by **HOSA** students from Cabot
- ★ Television and video production by **SkillsUSA** students from Springdale
- ★ Homemade butter production which is sold to local restaurants, and a national award-winning project examining world hunger, both by **FFA** students
- ★ Materials compiled through education in **Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA)**

Another highlight of the day was Governor Mike Beebe's proclamation of February as "Career and Technical Education Month." He recognized each CTSO and took photos with the students, who also visited legislative committees, as well as the chambers of the House and Senate.

On the evening before CTSO Day, students attended a dinner, where they visited with and heard remarks by Senator Jimmy Jeffress, Representative Eddie Cheatham and ACE Director William "Bill" Walker, Jr. Senator Gene Jeffress also attended the dinner and visited with students. The highlight of the evening's activities was learning how to interact with legislators through a presentation by Rodney Baker, director of governmental affairs for Arkansas Farm Bureau. Baker encouraged the students to "tell their story" to legislators they'd meet the next day.

CTSO Day was organized by Marion Fletcher, Department of Career Education's education and instruction manager for agricultural science and technology.



Left: ACE Director Walker speaks to SkillsUSA television production teacher Trent Jones (left) and student Jimi-Paige Thomas of Har-Ber High School. Right: Aren Motta (left) and Wiley Reed of Nashville High School are in FBLA and demonstrated their digital communications.

GOVERNOR BEEBE RECOGNIZES STATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS



DECA (left to right): ACE Director Walker; Amber Hensley, Harrison High School; Kelsey Kitchens, Alma High School; Miranda Nomancher, Alma High School; Brittany Griffin, Alma High School; Governor Beebe; Arkansas State DECA President Teryl Robinson, Alma High School; Taylor Carson, Alma High School; Jason Johnson, Harrison High School; Jim Brock, ACE business and marketing program manager and DECA state chair.



Project Lead the Way-Pre-Engineering, represented by students and staff from Russellville High School (left to right): Alex Floyd, sponsor; students Jian Zhang and Parker Dew; Governor Beebe; student Justin Vick; Bruce Lazarus, ACE program manager for school improvement; Director Walker.



FCCLA (left to right): Caren Smith, FCCLA adviser and Cara Smith, FCCLA state president, Melbourne High School; Governor Beebe; Suellen Ward, FCCLA state adviser and Family and Consumer Sciences program manager; Director Walker.



Arkansas FFA (left to right): Chris Bacchus, ACE education and instruction coordinator for agri; State FFA President Heather Leding; Governor Beebe; Karie Smith, ACE education and instruction coordinator for agri; Director Bill Walker; and Marion Fletcher, ACE program manager for agricultural science and technology.



SkillsUSA/Postsecondary/College (left to right): Skills USA State Director Jeremy Brevell; Charles Smith, postsecondary/college SkillsUSA state president, Governor Beebe; Sue Burris, postsecondary SkillsUSA advisor, ACE Director Walker.



SkillsUSA/Secondary (left to right): SkillUSA State Director Jeremy Brevell; Lindsey Johnson, secondary SkillsUSA advisor; Governor Beebe; Aaron Green, secondary SkillsUSA state president; Director Walker.



PBL (left to right): Dr. Terry Roach, professor and PBL advisor, Arkansas State University-Jonesboro; Governor Beebe; Aaron Carroll, Arkansas state PBL president and national PBL southern region president; Peggy Wakefield, PBL state adviser and ACE education and instruction coordinator for business and marketing; Director Walker.



FBLA (left to right): Director Walker; Peggy Wakefield, FBLA state adviser and ACE education and instruction coordinator for business and marketing; Maria Swicegood, business and marketing Instructor, Bryant High School; Governor Beebe; Jordan Murdock, Arkansas state FBLA president, Bryant High School; Jim Brock, ACE business and marketing program manager and FBLA state chair.



HOSA (left to right): Mike Aylett, HOSA advisor, River Valley Technical Center; Nakoia Lent, HOSA state president, River Valley Technical Center; Governor Beebe; Barbara Dimon, HOSA state advisor; Director Walker.

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services Business Relations News

Tour of ICAN Lab

Enlightens Cardinal Health's Local Employment Team

It was exciting to witness the many "ah-ha" moments when five management representatives from Cardinal Health's Sherwood customer service center recently toured the demonstration lab at the Increasing Capabilities Access Network (ICAN) offices.

Those visiting from Cardinal Health were Kathleen Carey, customer service vice president; Mike Shaw, human resources consultant; Stephen Cullum, business continuity and regulatory management specialist; and Karen Bennett, recruiter. They came to the ICAN lab to learn about accommodations and resources to help current and future employees with special needs, those who need temporary aids and those with permanent disabilities.

The Back Story

Recently, as part of its diversity initiative, Cardinal Health decided to seek local assistance with employee accommodation in Arkansas. A national resource database linked Cardinal Health to the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) Division.

ARS representatives were pleased to learn that the local Cardinal Health customer service center already employs several individuals with limitations or disabilities. They were even more pleased to hear that the company is committed to cultivating a diverse workforce including disabled employees – or "differently-abled," as described on Cardinal's website.

At the initial meeting with Cardinal Health representatives, Jim Moreland, ARS associate director for special programs, explained that ICAN's mission is to help Arkansas citizens retain their employment or find employment by offering training, equipment and other assistive technology resources to

increase workplace accessibility and accommodation. He emphasized ICAN as a resource for employees AND employers.

As a result of the initial meeting, ARS Business Relation Representative Ashley Cross was invited to tour Cardinal Health's Sherwood facility to observe work stations and assess the working environment. Cross then invited Cardinal Health representatives to tour the ICAN facility to see firsthand the assistive equipment and consultative resources ICAN staff could offer.

The ICAN Tour

Once in the ICAN demonstration lab, the Cardinal Health representatives talked about commonly requested or needed accommodations they'd experienced with their workforce. They specifically mentioned that employees in customer service center roles sometimes encounter issues with carpal tunnel syndrome, low vision and repetitive use strain, or need special accommodations to assist them in recovering from shoulder or wrist surgeries or injuries.

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Linda Morgan, occupational therapist with ARS, (left) shows Kathleen Carey of Cardinal Health the wide range of keyboards designed for workers with low vision or who have other special needs.



Rick Anderson, rehabilitation program coordinator (left), provides Mike Shaw of Cardinal Health the vendor and cost information for an in-line document holder, shown.

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From the moment Cardinal Health's team walked into the ICAN lab, there were many "ah-ha" moments as they learned what a valuable resource the lab could be for them and their employees.

Linda Morgan, ARS occupational therapist, demonstrated various accommodations at a work station set up to mimic Cardinal Health's work stations. Right off the bat, an in-line document holder attracted the visitors' attention because it helps reduce repetitive eye and neck movements that can cause problems for their employees.

The visitors also indicated that items such as an adjustable foot rest, an in-keyboard mouse for employees with limited range of motion and a padded wrist support that

clamps to a workstation could be useful to their employees.

Rick Anderson, ARS rehabilitation program coordinator, demonstrated the ICAN product inventory website that shows which items are available to be checked out, loaned, demonstrated or given free to the user.

"Now I see what ICAN offers and what a resource it will be to help me find what our employees need," said Stephen Cullum, who is responsible for employee safety and accommodation at Cardinal Health's Sherwood site.

"It's amazing that the ICAN lab offers a 'try before you buy' service so we can determine what works best before we spend a lot of money on the wrong item."

ARS Honors 12 Employees Recently Certified as Career Development Facilitators

Professional career guidance viewed as critical element in strengthening Arkansas's workforce

The auditorium at the central office of the Arkansas Department of Career Education (ACE), Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) Division, was filled with co-workers, family and friends on January 13. They were there to congratulate 12 ARS employees, many employed as business relations representatives, who recently were certified as career development facilitators (CDFs) by the National Career Development Association (NCDA).

"At the last senior management team retreat, I challenged our ARS managers to encourage their staffs to go through the CDF training," said Director Walker. "Rodney Chandler was the first to step up to

the plate and have his staff go through the CDF training, and I commend him and his staff for rising to this challenge."

"It is vital to our state and citizens that we have a cadre of individuals trained as CDFs so that they can help Arkansans of all ages plan for successful careers and pursue the education and training that will get them there," said Director Walker.

"Career development facilitators play an integral role in what our agency does through the Arkansas Works program, through career guidance classes in our schools and now through the work that our busi-

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More information about the **Career Development Facilitator (CDF)** certification can be found at the National Career Development Association's (NCDA) website: <http://ncda.org>. NCDA, at its national conference in July, will honor the Arkansas Career Development Association (ACDA) as the newest state chapter. The Arkansas chapter is also planning its own mini-state conference to be held in June. For more information, contact Ray Henson: ray.henson@arkansas.gov or 501-682-2375.

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Artee Williams, Arkansas Department of Workforce Services director, himself a graduate of the CDF course, encouraged the new graduates, saying, “You are now better equipped to help unemployed, under-employed and under-educated Arkansans get the skills, training and guidance they need to find jobs.”

business relations representatives will do as they work to place individuals with disabilities in meaningful jobs.”

Those with CDF certification are trained to provide high-quality career guidance to middle, secondary and college students; unemployed and underemployed adults; and even adults who want to change careers.

A special guest at the graduation ceremony was Artee Williams, director of the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, who also holds CDF certification.

“Many people change careers – not just jobs – three times in their lifetime. We have to be prepared to help our fellow citizens at every step along the way. This is why your certification is critical to our state’s future,” Williams told the graduates.

These most recent graduates join a growing number of Arkansans

with CDF certification. There are now more than 300 in the state, 70 of whom are employed at the agency Williams leads.

“Arkansas has a world-class geography in the center of the country, at the intersection of the major transportation arteries used to supply our nation’s goods and services. With your help, Arkansas can also boast a world-class workforce, one that’s ready to develop a world-class economy for our state,” Williams said.

John Davidson, ACE deputy director for career and technical education and former school principal, encouraged the graduates to remember that “one person can make a difference in whether a student drops out or stays in school, in whether they choose a career based on their skills and interests, or because they think it’s their only option. Now, you are even more prepared to provide critical guidance – guidance that can change the course of someone’s

life.”

Rodney Chandler, ARS business relations manager, manages the graduates in their “day jobs” but was also one of their classmates during the CDF course.

“You demonstrated a high-level of professionalism and dedication to the goal, and I am so proud of what you accomplished,” Chandler told the graduates.

He also thanked the agency’s leadership, ACE Director William “Bill” Walker, Jr. and ARS Commissioner Robert P. Treviño, saying, “Director Walker always encourages us to do more and to go further. He and Commissioner Trevino were so supportive of this program, both financially and through their encouragement, even when we were stretched thin between our regular jobs and this course’s requirements.”

Speaking on behalf of her fellow graduates, Laura Kimbrell, ARS business relations representative from Jonesboro, remarked that the certification “helped us gain more



Recently certified career development facilitators (CDF) from Arkansas Rehabilitation Services are, (l-r): Rodney Chandler, Bob Rubenstein, Eddie Hansford, Stephanie Bennett, Laura Kimbrell, Wanda Thomas, Darrell Stephens, Mary Hunt, Howard Brandes, Ashley Cross and Frank Baptist. Not pictured is Libby Wolf.

insight into how we can help our clients, plus we gained new confidence in ourselves. The 20 weeks of hard work were definitely worth it.”

Business Relations Representative Ricky Harvey served as emcee. Matthew Myers, ARS institutional services assistant, opened the ceremony by singing the National Anthem, and graduate Ashley Cross provided inspiration with “What a Wonderful World.” The invocation was given by Fr. Rick M.

Ward-Harder, chaplain at the Arkansas Career Training Institute, and the benediction by Pastor Larry Johnson, Cross’s father.

Offering congratulatory remarks to the graduates were Director Walker; Commissioner Treviño; Ray Henson, certified global CDF instructor (GCDFI) and ACE education and instruction manager; Carl Daughtery, ARS chief of field services; and Sonja Wright-McMurray, ACE associate director for Arkansas Works.

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need more structure and more English as a Second Language levels.”

Like the coaches, students also participated in focus groups, which allowed them to offer their opinions and suggestions freely, with no adults present.

At Hope High School, the student focus group was made up of nine junior and seniors who represented the school’s student demographics, including two students who were undecided about college. Overall, the students said they were excited about Arkansas Works and the career coaches at school and that they were now more informed about and more likely to attend college.

“I wish there were more career coaches at school,” said student Jose’ Hernandez. “They give me guidance and motivation. They help out a lot.”

According to what the Hope students said, the coaches are doing a great job there.

“Having the career coaches makes my life easier,” said student Shelly Harbin. “Just having them here is going to give me more opportunities at a better life.”

Wright-McMurray says the information gathered from the focus groups will be discussed during a future Arkansas Works meeting when everyone involved with the initiative will get the opportunity to move an already successful program forward even further.

“We’ll have a chance to talk with the college and career coaches about the ideas they received from one another and from the students,” said Wright-McMurray. “We don’t just want to put policies in place that we think will work. We want to use ideas that our students and coaches think are beneficial.”

13th Annual Youth Leadership Forum!

When: July 11-15, 2011

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 May 15, 2011.

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.**





What You Should Know

Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP)

Dale Turrentine, Program Manager

TOP EIGHT REASONS TO USE A COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM:

1. Expertise of providing services to individuals with the most significant disabilities.
2. Assessing and identifying the individual's job skills and any barriers to employment.
3. Identifying whether the individual has the abilities to become employed, abilities that include following instructions, staying focused on a task, eye/hand coordination, time management, observing time schedules for breaks and understanding how social interaction with others may affect employment.
4. Training through in-house businesses opportunities, real work opportunities and community employment—learning viable job skills.
5. Introducing and training individuals in understanding their own responsibilities in a work setting and the satisfaction of completing a work assignment.
6. Experiential learning through interactions with coworkers, peers, supervisors and other authority figures and the general public in the community.
7. Teaching individuals to accept responsibility for their actions.
8. Providing an environment to learn about the importance of

earning money and how to budget. (Thank you to Freddie Smith, VR counselor, Texarkana Field Office)

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) enjoys programmatic partnerships with 19 nonprofit community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) across the state. The primary purpose of the CRPs is to help individuals with disabilities overcome barriers to competitive employment through evaluation, skills training and job placement. CRPs offer the necessary services and support for individuals with disabilities to successfully live and work in the community. CRPs provide a safe, structured environment conducive to learning new skills for competitive employment.

ARS has contracts with the CRPs to provide services to people with significant disabilities. Services include 10-day work assessment, 60-day work adjustment and up to 180 days of extended services, on-the-job training and job placement.

ARS vocational counselors can refer individuals with disabilities to their local CRPs in Status 06, Extended Evaluation, to help determine eligibility for rehabilitation services, or Status 18, Receiving Service Status, for a 10-day assessment/evaluation that identifies and mea-

sures the individual's work-related behaviors to determine the need for additional training, job placement or other services.

Each CRP is assigned an ARS facility specialist (Darlene Owens or Tammy Stokes), who is responsible for updating the CRPs on changes regarding certification, billing and training. The facility specialists work closely with the CRPs year round, providing support by verifying monthly billing for payment, annual recertifications, technical assistance training and follow-up services. The facility specialists also work with ARS counselors to provide training and technical assistance. For technical assistance from a facility specialist, please contact Darlene Owens at Darlene.Owens@arkansas.gov or 501-296-1652 or Tammy Stokes at Tammy.Stokes@arkansas.gov or 501-296-1651.

ARS counselor liaisons are assigned to each CRP, making contact on a monthly basis or more often to ensure a local level communication for relationship building. The counselor liaison works closely with the CRPs to ensure concerns are addressed in a timely manner related to the needs and services to individuals with disabilities.

Next time you visit the local CRP, consider the array of employment

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Hogs Hoops Legend Holds Teamwork Seminar for ARS Staffers

Teamwork and client service are the cornerstone upon which any successful organization is built, and Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) is no exception. In January, Arkansas Razorback basketball legend and five-time NBA All-Star Sidney Moncrief led a workshop at Shorter College in North Little Rock to show ARS Special Programs Section employees how to sharpen those skills.

As managing partner of Pacific Sports Consulting Group, Moncrief uses his experiences on the hardwood to demonstrate the association between basketball and business. Moncrief said that success in any business endeavor and any professional relationship begins with enthusiasm, which he defines as three equal parts passion, participation and power.

“Success begins with being passionate about your career, showing up and being part of your team,” Moncrief said. “You must cheer instead of boo your clients and coworkers. Your associates are depending on you to bring energy and passion to the workplace.”

Workshop attendees helped Moncrief list ways employees might undermine office morale or boo their coworkers. Some suggestions included condescension, manipulation of position, gossip, whining and complaining. Moncrief then asked for ways to cheer

coworkers on in the office as a way of creating a happier, more productive workplace. The ARS employees obliged with suggestions such as courtesy, respect, positive mental attitudes, praise, compliments and sincere greetings.

ARS Commissioner Robert Treviño said the seminar taught simple lessons, but in the end would achieve a substantial mission.

“We want to build a championship ARS organization,” said Treviño. “We want to understand and enhance personal teamwork skills and to provide ARS clients with a professional and educational experience. I think that’s what we’re going to accomplish.”

Throughout the day, Moncrief had employees focus on teamwork enrichment exercises to enhance the staffers’ existing client service skills. According to Moncrief, communication, passion and commitment are the most important skills to cultivate for both teamwork and client service.

“You have to play to your strength to allow for other team members to accommodate for the weaknesses of others,” Moncrief said. “Communication in all things is critical. Everyone will have a different job and will be focused on the task at hand. Verbalization allows for more efficient and effective work.”



Moncrief (second from left) coaches the staff of ARS’ Special Programs Section in an exercise to promote teamwork and communication skills.



In Our Memory: Oswald Weise, Jr.

The field of career education in Arkansas lost a hero when Oswald Weise Jr., 90, passed away February 9. In 1952, Weise was hired to teach agriculture at the DeQueen High School. With mechanization and automation moving rapidly in agriculture he designed a mechanics program, the first of its kind. In 1959, he accepted a position with the Arkansas Department of Education and expanded the program statewide. In 1969, Mr. Weise developed Career Orientation, which helps junior high students plan a career path. Today, Career Orientation is a required course for all Arkansas students. Oswald Weise completed 42 years of vocational education service.

Janice Hanlon, GED Administrator for ACE, has fond memories of Mr. Weise. "He loved his job and enjoyed working with the teachers. When I came to the Department (of Workforce Education) as Equity Coordinator, Mr. Weise was always willing to help, had a great attitude and was liked by all who worked with him."

Weise is survived by his wife, Lorene Cash Weise of Little Rock; three daughters; one sister; five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

In this undated photo, then-director of the Vocational and Technical Education Division (now Department of Career Education) Dr. Barry Ballard presents Weise a career service award.

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possibilities such as those observed during the last annual onsite monitoring visit:

"Go Green" - collecting refuse, recycling items and reclamation of the collections. Work skills include sorting, shredding or preparing clothing, paper, plastic, computer parts and metal items for recycling.

Factory assembling - team assemblers through production and processing of materials (sorting, packaging and labeling parts), using packaging compactors, press machine operations and tool setters.

Food service - preparation, cooking, taking customer orders, serving meals, clean-up and cashier.

Retail sales - creating graphic design, screen printing, press operator and learning Internet sales through Ebay.

Environmental services - automobile detailing, grounds-keeping and janitorial.

For more information about the Community Program Development Section, Program Planning, Development, and Evaluation, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, please call Pat Hensley at 501-296-1650 or e-mail dale.turrentine@arkansas.gov.



The Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) Fort Smith field office (District IV) recently became a member of the Fort Smith Regional Chamber of Commerce and celebrated March 2 with a ribbon-cutting. Chamber members have been learning about ARS services and how their businesses can benefit from partnering with ARS in meeting their employment needs. ARS staff and representatives from local businesses attended, including (l-r) Tad Steffenson, Staples; Jennifer Caldwell, Arvest Bank; Rick Harvey, Beverly Lindgren, Carolyn Odom, Glenda Catlett, Judy Newton, Erica Olson, Carolyn Jackson, Amanda Connell, and Sherry Hollingshead (wielding scissors), all of the ARS Fort Smith field office; Brittany Gallaher, Dallas St. Dentistry; Marty Bousum, Progressive Business Systems; Bill Ligon, Dallas St. Dentistry; and Shannon Ladd, The Elder Law Practice.

DIRECTOR *continued from page 2*

ality is that America is still failing to prepare millions of its young people to lead successful lives as adults. Evidence of this failure is everywhere: in the dropout epidemic that plagues our high schools and colleges, in the alarming fact that only 30 percent of our young adults earn a bachelor's degree by age 27 and in teen and young adult unemployment rates that are higher than at any time since the Great Depression.

The report contends that our national strategy for education and youth development has been too narrowly focused on an academic, classroom-based approach, which has produced only modest gains in achievement and attainment, with the result that many other nations are leapfrogging the United States. In response, the report advocates development of a comprehensive pathways network to serve youth in high school and beyond. This pathways system would be based on three essential elements:

- ▶ The first element is the development of a broader vision of school reform that embraces multiple pathways to help young people successfully navigate the journey from adolescence to adulthood. This new vision would include far more emphasis on career counseling and high-quality career and technical education, as well as apprenticeship programs and community colleges as viable routes to well-paying jobs.
- ▶ The second element is a greatly expanded role for our nation's employers in supporting the pathways system and in providing more opportunities for young adults to participate in work-based learning and actual jobs related to their programs of study.
- ▶ The third element is the development of a new social compact between society and our young people. The goal of this compact would be to ensure that by the time they reach their mid-20s, all young adults will be equipped with the education and experience they need to lead a successful lives as adults.

In his remarks at the release of the *Pathways* report, **The New CTE: Secretary Duncan's Remarks on Career and Technical Education**, U. S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan stressed that *career and*

technical education has for too long been the "neglected stepchild" of education reform and that this neglect must stop. Second, he called for a new "CTE 2.0" with a clearly defined goal of preparing students to earn a postsecondary degree or an industry-recognized certification and to land a job that will lead to a successful career.

As you can see, the implications for education are significant. As noted by Secretary Duncan, the standard must be the same for career-readiness as for college-readiness. The standard for both must be that the student possesses the knowledge and skills to participate in postsecondary education and training without the need for remediation. In addition, the college-ready student and the career-ready student both need critical thinking and problem-solving skills, along with the ability to synthesize information, solid communications skills, and the ability to work effectively as a member of a team.

In Arkansas, we are already moving toward the vision of multiple pathways that will address the goals of all students, but we still have far to go and we need the continued hard work and support of everyone. I know all of you share the goal of an educational system that values career-readiness as well college-readiness and will do your part to ensure that all Arkansans are afforded opportunities to succeed.

I hope that you will read both *Pathways to Prosperity* and Secretary Duncan's remarks if you have not yet had the opportunity to do so. You can access the *Pathways* report at http://www.gse.harvard.edu/news_events/features/2011/Pathways_to_Prosperty_Feb2011.pdf and Secretary Duncan's remarks at <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/new-cte-secretary-duncans-remarks-career-and-technical-education>.

The Brain Injury Association of Arkansas presents its annual **Walk for Thought Run for Recovery 5k run and 1 mile walk** for traumatic and acquired brain injury survivors, their families, and all Arkansans wanting to support and advocate for a great cause.

WHEN: **Saturday April 16, 2011 at 10:00 AM**
at the Murray Park Pavilions in Little Rock.

ENTRY FEES: Registration includes a long-sleeve (**\$30** entry) or short-sleeve (**\$25** entry) t-shirt, a meal provided by Green Cart Deli and participation in the walk or run.

Please contact **James Saviers**, occupational therapist with ARS's AT@Work department, with any questions:

james.saviers@arkansas.gov, or call 501-683-3007.

Additional information can also be found at <http://www.brainassociation.org/>

Arkansas GED® Pass Rate Up in 2010

State Likely Above National Average
for 10th Straight Year

A full 85.8 percent of Arkansans who took the General Educational Development (GED) passed the test in 2010, up from 84 percent in 2009. When the nationwide statistics for 2010 are released later this year, Janice Hanlon, the state's GED administrator with the Department of Career Education (ACE), expects it to mark the 10th consecutive year that Arkansas has exceeded the national pass rate.

Arkansas's average pass rate from 2001-2009 was 84.0 percent vs. a national pass rate for that same period of 70.7 percent. **In 2010, 8,783 Arkansans were tested and 7,539 passed, the highest number to both take and pass the GED since 2001**, when 11,205 were tested and 9,141 passed (81.6 percent). 2001 was also the year before significant changes were made to the GED test series. In the past 10 years, more than 70,000 Arkansans have passed the GED exam.

Hanlon sees three keys to this success rate.

"The Arkansas GED program requires examinees to pass an official practice test before they take the real test," she said. "Also, Arkansas is one of the few states offering the test at no charge. Many states charge from \$35 to \$150 per test, and that's prohibitive for many."

Arkansas also has a network of adult education centers serving all counties. Those seeking an Arkansas High School Diploma, awarded to those who pass the GED exam, may go straight to a practice exam or enroll in GED preparation classes at an adult education center. A list of adult education centers by county is available at <http://ace.arkansas.gov/ged.htm> or by calling ACE's GED Office at 501-682-1980.

The highest possible score on the GED exam is 800, and "the top Arkansas score in 2010 was 768 and was earned by two examinees – a tie," Hanlon proudly reported.

Many of Arkansas's two-year colleges and some four-year institutions offer scholarships that are available to GED recipients, with some even specifying a minimum GED score. A statewide list of GED-eligible scholarships is available from ACE's GED office (telephone: 501-682-1980).

Dispelling the notion that earning a GED is an easy

Spotlight on Joy Mayes

North Central Adult Education Center:
An Ingredient in Student's Success



Joy Mayes

North Central Career Center in Leslie.

Mayes was home-schooled, so earning a GED diploma was a way of credentialing and certifying a successful home-school experience. Over the course of a year, she periodically attended classes at North Central Career Center before taking and passing the GED exam.

According to Mayes, having a GED was critical when applying for jobs, and she'd recommend oth-

SPOTLIGHT continued on page 19

way to get a high school diploma, Hanlon said, "The test isn't easy. It is designed so that only 60 percent of graduating high school seniors could pass it the first time. We don't encourage any traditional high school student to drop out of school to take the GED test. It is just another option for people who have already dropped out, are home-schooled or want the GED documentation to apply for a better job."

In fact, "to qualify for a better job" is the second most common reason examinees give for pursuing a GED. Many who have been laid off or lost a job or who want a better job have found a high-school diploma or GED is usually a mandatory application requirement.

What's the number one reason people take the GED? "Personal satisfaction," says Hanlon.

"Whether simply a teenager who recently dropped out of high school or an over-50 adult who has had passing the GED as a life-long goal, passing the test is something they primarily do for themselves, and we're happy to help them."

CORNER

“Assistive Technology 4 Life”



Talking Calculators

Offer Accommodation for the Visually Impaired

submitted by

Eddie Schmeckenbecher, Increasing Capabilities Access Network (ICAN) Program Coordinator

As the name suggests, a talking calculator’s main feature is the ability to provide an audible account of what the calculator is doing. This feature makes calculating tasks easier and more efficient for someone who cannot easily see a standard display. Most talking calculators come with:

- ▣ Basic arithmetic functions
- ▣ Memory plus and memory minus
- ▣ Square root and percent keys
- ▣ Volume control for high, low and off options
- ▣ Ear phone jacks

The Reizen company offers a 10-digit talking calculator with an alarm clock built in. All digits and functions entered, as well as calculations, are read aloud to the operator. The calculator also features time and calendar at the touch of a button, and voice volume is adjustable. . The large, easy-to-read buttons measure ¾” X ½”. The display measures 5 1/2” X 1 1/8” for easier viewing. The ICAN item number is 49473.

Some companies offer their standard calculator models with an add-on talking feature. For example, Texas Instruments calculators have functions that are unique to their particular models. The TI-36X (ICAN number 49357) is identical to the standard TI-36X but with the voice program. A great calculator for visually impaired students and teachers, it has clear and natural speech and can be adjusted for quiet operation. Each key is spoken when pressed, as is the display. This calculator has a unique learning mode that allows for key identification without interrupting the operation and will perform over 127 scientific functions, including

- ▣ 1 and 2 variable statistics
- ▣ Trigonometry functions
- ▣ Unit conversion
- ▣ Logarithms
- ▣ Hyperbolic functions
- ▣ Metric conversions

Contact ICAN for a list of talking calculators available for demonstration and/or loan. ICAN staff will gladly provide product and vendor information.

Contact ICAN by phone at 800-828-2799 or 501-666-8868. See inventory of products available for demonstration or loan at ICAN’s recently updated website: www.ar-ican.org. Click on “ICAN equipment database.”



SPOTLIGHT *continued from page 18*

ers get help through the adult education program. She sums up her feelings and attitude about earning her Arkansas High School Diploma by saying, “I think it’s important.”

Mary Kirk, North Central Adult Education Center instructor, said of Mayes, “She’s a very bright young woman and capable of doing anything she sets her mind to.” Kirk says her own success in instructing students—like Mayes—comes largely from truly caring about the students, how they perform, and what happens in their lives.

Being in the restaurant business is not a new experience for Mayes. Her parents ran the Leslie Café for 15 years, and Mayes helped with nearly every aspect of managing a restaurant as she was growing up. She later worked in Russellville and managed a restaurant there, but a desire to go back to Leslie and manage her own business was the inspiration behind the Skylark Café.



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