

July - August 2007

 **the** *Workforce*
Counselor



A publication of Arkansas Department of Workforce Education
501-682-1500 ♦ <http://dwe.arkansas.gov>

Walker outlines agency vision of one unit, one family, with one vision and one voice

“**O**ne unit, one family, with one vision and one voice.” Those were the words of Arkansas Department of Workforce Education Director William L. “Bill” Walker, Jr., addressing his administration’s first joint meeting of the Department Workforce Education and Arkansas Rehabilitation Services division July 17 at Shorter College in North Little Rock. Shorter College serves as the location of one of the Department of Workforce Education’s adult education centers. That, along with its central location, contributed to its selection as the site of the agency’s first meeting.

Director Walker explained to the more than 400 employees assembled that

operating the Department of Workforce Education and Rehabilitation Services as one unit, rather than as separate entities, will lead to better utilization of services by Arkansas’s citizens.

“We will accomplish the goals we have set forth through better communication within our agency,” he said. “For many years, Workforce Education and Rehabilitation Services operated in a fashion where ‘the right hand really didn’t know what the left hand was doing.’ And in many circumstances, we were duplicating some of our services. We were duplicating expenses and duplicating time spent doing some of the same things. In some cases, if

VISION continued on page 21



Arkansans Win Medals at National SkillsUSA Conference in Kansas City

SkillsUSA held its national conference in Kansas City, Missouri, June 26 through June 30. The conference was a showcase of public high school and postsecondary, college and technical education students from across the United States. More than 14,000 career and technical education students, teachers, education leaders, and representatives from more than 1,100 national corporations, trade associations, businesses and labor unions attended the event. There were over 1,500 judges and contest organizers and over \$25 million in donated cash, materials, and in-kind support from business and industry.



(l-r) State SkillsUSA officers Neal Rankin, Joana Murcia, Hector Bello, Niki Barnhouse, DWE Director Bill Walker, Allie Ward, Brittany Gamble, Jamie Cole, Brittany Beird

SKILLS continued on page 15

Director's Update

“Raising the Bar” for the Workforce of the 21st Century

By William L. “Bill” Walker, Jr., Director
Arkansas Department of Workforce Education



This is the first of my columns you will see in our newly updated, monthly **Workforce Counselor**. In this column, I will share with you my vision of where our agency is going in the field of Workforce Education and Rehabilitation, as well as share with you the successes we've achieved in different areas.

Since taking the helm of the Department of Workforce Education in March, I have been busy reviewing every aspect of the agency from top to bottom. The Department provides a full range of services for the citizens

of Arkansas and I'm sure many Arkansans aren't fully aware of all that this agency is capable of doing to assist them in various aspects of their lives.

We plan on changing that lack of awareness about our agency. One of the first changes I made when I was appointed, was to put together the Communications Departments from the Department of Workforce Education and Arkansas Rehabilitation Services under one roof. The immediate result was an improved information publication that reaches more people and talks more about what this agency does to assist Arkansans. We plan on improving our visibility, and we plan on promoting our agency more, so that more Arkansans, more businesses and more industries will know who to call when they need our services.

When Governor Mike Beebe appointed me as Director, he challenged us to “Raise the Bar” in the job that the Department of Workforce Education does for the state. He's given us an opportunity to reach out to some

WALKER continued on page 8



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

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What You Should Know

Supported Housing

Jeanette Davies, Program Administrator

The Arkansas Department of Workforce Education's Rehabilitation Services Division is charged with putting persons with disabilities to work. Throughout our history, the division has been steadfast in its commitment to prepare Arkansans with disabilities for the workforce, rebalancing programs to respond to technological advances, labor market forecasts and the shifting needs of clients, necessary for permanent, sustained employment. So why does Rehabilitation Services have a Supported Housing Office (SHO) and how does the office augment the division's mission? The purpose of this article is to provide a snapshot of Supported Housing Office activities and illustrate how our partnerships with the affordable housing network relate to our success with putting individuals with disabilities to work.

But first, a bit of historical perspective. Both federal rehabilitation and housing programs have their roots in the early years of the 20th Century, with the passage of the Civilian Rehabilitation Act of 1920 and the National Housing Act of 1934. The NHA, which was the first landmark housing law of the New Deal era, created the Federal Housing Agency to stimulate housing by insuring mortgages made by private lenders.

Since the first wave of Baby Boomers came of age in the 1960s, we have witnessed unprecedented changes in government, social, political, and cultural programs, a phenomenon that continues to reverberate today as these boomers near retirement age. Specifically, the breadth and scope of the boomer influence has been notable in the increase, structure, and delivery of rehabilitation, housing and community development, and health and human services programs. Today, partnerships with public and private agencies and community providers yield

dividends that exceed each group's individual reach and authority.

Historically, the Rehabilitation Services Division and other health and human services agencies focused on their respective areas of expertise quite successfully. Generally speaking, housing was just not an issue. After all, everybody had a roof over their heads. Prior to the establishment of the Supported Housing Office, most disability groups had been "going it alone" in their quest to expand affordable supported housing options for people with disabilities. Despite their best efforts, it was clear that this approach cannot solve the housing problem. The fact is, continued expansion of the supply of affordable housing options requires the development of long-term partnerships between service providers and "housers."

The Supported Housing Office was created in the early 1990s to augment the Rehabilitation Services Division mission through the development of strategic partnerships to increase the supply of affordable supported housing for Arkansans with disabilities. **Supported Housing is defined as any type of housing linked to appropriate services that enable those with disabilities and the elderly to live independently.** Supported Housing Office partners include consumers/advocates, the disability community, local, state, and federal housing and economic development agencies, the design build community, human services agencies, and nonprofit housing and service providers.

To frame our discussion, consider the fact that, with the 2000 Census reporting, Arkansas has the third highest percentage of persons with disabilities in the country. Moreover, research conducted in 2004 for the Arkansas Universal Design Project found that

HOUSING continued on page 4

HOUSING *continued from page 3*

Arkansas is the only state in the union to rank 7th or higher, percentage-wise, in the following categories: Poverty, Disability, Rate of Poverty Increase, Residents 60+ and SSI/SSDI Recipients.

The Supported Housing Office is a “one-stop” affordable housing shop with the expertise to sort through a maze of 25+ major housing programs, ranging from emergency shelter programs to homeownership initiatives. The office also provides targeted research, pre-development consultations, and training for groups interested in the development of single and multi-family housing throughout the state.

Early on, the Supported Housing Office developed the first statewide Low-Income Homebuyers Assistance Program for Arkansas Development Finance Authority with HOME Program funds, and partnered with the Governor’s Developmental Disabilities Council and regional service providers to implement a homeownership project for persons with developmental disabilities.

The office also staffs the Governor’s Task Force on Supported Housing which was convened to develop the housing component of the State’s Olmstead Plan. The Arkansas Olmstead Plan was developed in response to the U.S. Supreme Court Decision, *Olmstead v. L.C.*, a 1999 landmark disability rights case in which the Court decreed that the “Integration Regulation” of the Americans with Disabilities Act requires state and local governments to administer services, programs and activities

in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of qualified individuals with disabilities,” and directed states to develop plans to comply with the decision.

The GTFSH developed a comprehensive affordable housing plan constructed around the fact that income, not disability or age, drives housing decisions. The plan centers on increased utilization of existing resources and production of single and multi-family housing throughout the state. The Task Force adopted a model that benefits all, that being the production of mixed-income, universal design housing for persons with disabilities as well as non-disabled persons.

The SHO, in concert with the

GTFSH, is currently focusing on several Olmstead initiatives, the most comprehensive being the Arkansas Universal Design Project. The AUDP, in collaboration with the University of Arkansas School Of Architecture, was created to develop universal design standards for ADFA’s new construction housing programs. This partnership will result in the largest enduring impact on the supply of housing for those with disabilities in the state’s history. A wealth of information on the AUDP is available at www.studioaid.org.

For additional information about affordable housing programs or GTFSH initiatives, contact Jeanette Davies at 501-624-4411, extension 292.

HSRC names Wright Employee of the Month

Gwen Wright, Vocational Instructor in the Employability Service department of the Hot Springs Rehabilitation Center, has been named the center’s Employee of the Month for July.

Wright began her career with HSRC in 1971, but knew about the work they did from her time there as a student. She participated in the PAVR (Public Assistance for Vocational Rehabilitation) program which provided training to those from families who were referred by welfare services. “Coming from a background like I did, where I didn’t have the opportunity to go to college after I graduated, it was a great option.”

Prior to completing her training in the center’s Business Education program, she was offered employment in the PAVR program where supervisor John Dixon became her mentor. She has instructed in psycho/social skills and was a case/social worker helping families relocating to the Hot Springs area find housing, child care and other



Gwen Wright

WRIGHT continued on page 14



FBLA & PBL

2007

National Leadership Conference



Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) and Phi Beta Lambda (PBL) both held their national conferences in Chicago this summer. FBLA's conference ran from June 23 through June 26 and PBL's conference was held from June 29 through July 2. Several members of the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education staff were on hand: **Jim Brock**, with the office of Business and Marketing, is the Future Business Leaders of America State Adviser; **LaTrenda Jackson**, with the office of Business and Marketing, is the local adviser for the Phi Beta Lambda Virtual Chapter; and **Peggy Wakefield**, with Workforce Training, is the Phi Beta Lambda state adviser.

At the FBLA national conference, Arkansas was represented by approximately 250 students from 15 chapters. Arkansas students participated in 30 competitive events. The following students placed in their respective categories:

- 🏆 1st Technology Concepts—**Conner Kirkman**—Harding Academy
- 🏆 2nd Electronic Career Portfolio—**Emily Ruckman**—Fort Smith Southside
- 🏆 3rd Computer Operating Systems—**Andrew Austin**—Fort Smith Northside
- 🏆 4th Job Interview—**Emilee Higdon**—Mulberry
- 🏆 5th Business Law—**Andrew Austin**—Fort Smith Northside
- 🏆 6th American Enterprise Project—**Heath Nance, Chris Ross, and Tyler Garrett**—Siloam Springs
- 🏆 6th Spreadsheets — **Brandon Meyers**—Springdale
- 🏆 6th Desktop Publishing—**Katie Veach, Katlin Minton**—Manila
- 🏆 7th Visual Basic Programming—**Andrew Reyes**—Alpena
- 🏆 7th C++ Programming—**Scott Bedwell**—Bentonville
- 🏆 8th Introduction to Technology Concepts—**Alex Stokes**—Bryant
- 🏆 8th Future Business Leader—**Somer Allen**—

- Nettleton
- 🏆 8th Digital Video Production—**Savannah Sealy, Andrew Simmons, Kenny Nguyen**—Arkansas High, Texarkana
- 🏆 9th Business Communications—**Jordan Crawford**—Cotter
- 🏆 10th Management Decision Making—**Matt Loggins, Josh Hare**—Vilonia
- 🏆 10th Introduction to Business Communications—**Lauren Irby**—Siloam Springs
- 🏆 15th Public Speaking II—**Haley Whorton**—Dardanelle
- 🏆 **Spencer LunBeck**, of Nettleton High School, was named to the National Future Business Leaders of America Who's-Who.

This past year, Arkansas FBLA sponsored five state service projects and raised over \$100,000 for March of Dimes, Arkansas Children's Hospital, Leukemia Society, and the Make-a-Wish Foundation. For their efforts, Arkansas was recognized nationally as the chapter that raised the most money for the March of Dimes with a total of \$85,000 in donations. Nettleton High School FBLA received first place at the National Conference as the local chapter that raised the most money for the March of Dimes with over \$18,000 in donations.

At Phi Beta Lambda's national conference, 14 Arkansas chapters were represented by over 125 students, advisers and guests. Arkansas students competed in 47 of the 50 competitive events and Arkansas placed in 37 of the 47 events. The following students placed in their respective categories:

- 🏆 1st American Enterprise Project— **Lynda McCollum, Shandy Russell, Kristen Vines**—University of the Ozarks
- 🏆 1st Community Service Project—**Kari Wood**—University of the Ozarks

LEADERSHIP *continued from page 5*

- 🏆 1st Impromptu Speaking-**Derek Glover**-Harding University
- 🏆 1st Management Concepts-**Denise Duarte, Marlon Clairm, Tahis Ruiz**-University of the Ozarks
- 🏆 1st Organizational Behavior-**Maria Duarte**-University of the Ozarks
- 🏆 2nd Business Communication-**Matt Jeffery**-Williams Baptist College
- 🏆 2nd Business Plan-**Hannah Cross, Britton Riddle**-University of Arkansas-Fort Smith
- 🏆 2nd Business Policy & Strategic Management-**Maria Duarte**-University of the Ozarks
- 🏆 2nd Economic Concepts-**Jennifer Price**-University of Arkansas-Fort Smith
- 🏆 2nd Future Business Executive-**Buddy Faulkner**-University of the Ozarks
- 🏆 2nd Human Resource Management-**Colby Pierce**-University of Arkansas-Fort Smith
- 🏆 2nd Largest Local Chapter Membership-**University of the Ozarks**
- 🏆 2nd Largest State Chapter Membership-**Arkansas**
- 🏆 2nd Largest State Membership-**Arkansas**
- 🏆 2nd Marketing Concepts-**Paul Brown**- Williams Baptist College
- 🏆 2nd Organizational Behavior-**Paul Brown**- Williams Baptist College
- 🏆 2nd Parliamentary Procedure-**Daniela Bermudez, Jana Rossmailer, Raquel Daboub, Jorge Avila**-University of the Ozarks
- 🏆 2nd Partnership with Business



FBLA National Leadership Conference Champions

- Project--**Hannah Cross, Casey Maxey, Jacquelyn Porter**-University of Arkansas-Fort Smith
- 🏆 2nd Telecommunications-**Matt Smith**- Williams Baptist College
- 🏆 3rd Business Ethics-**Ana Garcia, Enyinnaya Inyana, Michelle Linares**-University of the Ozarks
- 🏆 3rd Community Service Project-**Krista Setzer, Jeri Hurst**-North Arkansas College
- 🏆 3rd Computer Concepts-**Adam Choate**-South Arkansas Community College
- 🏆 3rd E-Business, **Shelley Keith**-Southern Arkansas University
- 🏆 3rd Largest State Membership Professional Division-**Arkansas**
- 🏆 3rd Local Chapter Annual Business Report-**University of the Ozarks**
- 🏆 3rd Partnership with Business Project-**Amber Amonette, Danielle Collier, Krista Treadway**-Southern Arkansas University
- 🏆 3rd Sales Presentation-**Dallas Haas**-University of Arkansas-Fort Smith
- 🏆 3rd Visual Basic Programming-**James McMurrin**-North Arkansas College
- 🏆 3rd Word Processing-**Cindy Duncan**-South Arkansas Community College
- 🏆 4th Emerging Business Issues-**Brandon McFadden, Britton Riddle**-University of Arkansas-Fort Smith
- 🏆 5th Business Law-**Shanda Stephens** - Southeast Arkansas College
- 🏆 5th Digital Video Production-**Martha Dunn, Melissa Franklin**-South Arkansas Community College
- 🏆 5th Economic Analysis & Decision Making-**Judith Lopez**- University of the Ozarks
- 🏆 5th International Business-**Jorge Avila**- University of the Ozarks
- 🏆 5th Management Concepts-**Geral Vasquez, Shandy Russell**-University of the Ozarks
- 🏆 6th Accounting for Professionals-**Danny Canady**-Harding University
- 🏆 6th Economic Concepts-**Matthew Swindle**-Harding University
- 🏆 6th Emerging Business Issues-**William Gaskins, Koffi**

LEADERSHIP *continued on page 7*

LEADERSHIP *continued from page 6*

- 🏆 **Agbemehin**-Hendrix College
- 🏆 6th Marketing Analysis & Decision Making-**Joe Southwell**- University of the Ozarks
- 🏆 6th Public Speaking-**Kasie Osmond**- University of the Ozarks
- 🏆 7th Business Decision Making-**Rushawn Engleton, Marivi Davila, Davis Rivas**- University of the Ozarks
- 🏆 7th Business Plan-**Alis Perdomo**-University of the Ozarks
- 🏆 7th Impromptu Speaking-**Krista Treadway**- Southern Arkansas University
- 🏆 7th Network Design-**Matt Smith, Reid Rogers**-Williams Baptist College
- 🏆 7th Network Concepts-**John Lloyd**- North Arkansas College
- 🏆 8th American Enterprise Project-**Amber Armonette**- Southern Arkansas University
- 🏆 8th Computer Concepts-**Aaron Bueg**-North Arkansas University
- 🏆 8th Job Interview-**Kourtney Norton**-Arkansas State University-Beebe
- 🏆 8th Statistical Analysis-**Evelyn Chin**- University of the Ozarks
- 🏆 9th Hospitality Management-**Deborah Poyner**-North Arkansas College
- 🏆 9th Management Analysis & Decision Making-**Lindsey Wilson**-Williams Baptist College
- 🏆 9th Network Design-**John Lloyd, Phoebe Pearson**- North Arkansas College
- 🏆 9th State Chapter Annual Business Report-**Buddy Faulkner**- Arkansas

🏆 10th Marketing Concepts-**Alison Potts**-University of Arkansas-Fort Smith

🏆 10th Public Speaking-**Tonya Smith**- North Arkansas College
 Another highlight from the PBL national convention is election of **Ashley Keymer**, a student at the University of the Ozarks, as Phi Beta Lambda National President for 2007-2008.

Future Business Leaders of America is for students in middle level (6-9th) grades and senior level (9-12th) grades who are pursuing business or business education careers. There are 14,422 active members of FBLA in Arkansas. FBLA's mission is to bring business and education together in a positive working relationship through innovative leadership and career development programs. FBLA provides the business leaders of tomorrow with the necessary skills to successfully compete in the job market, pursue postsecondary education, or manage personal skills. FBLA members learn the value of competition through directed competitive events, business competencies, community responsibilities, and self-confidence.

Phi Beta Lambda differs from FBLA in that PBL is for college or postsecondary students pursuing a business or business-related career. This year, there are 726 members in 23 Arkansas PBL chapters. PBL provides opportunities for post-secondary students to develop vocational competencies for business and office occupations and business teacher education. It is an integral part of the instructional program.

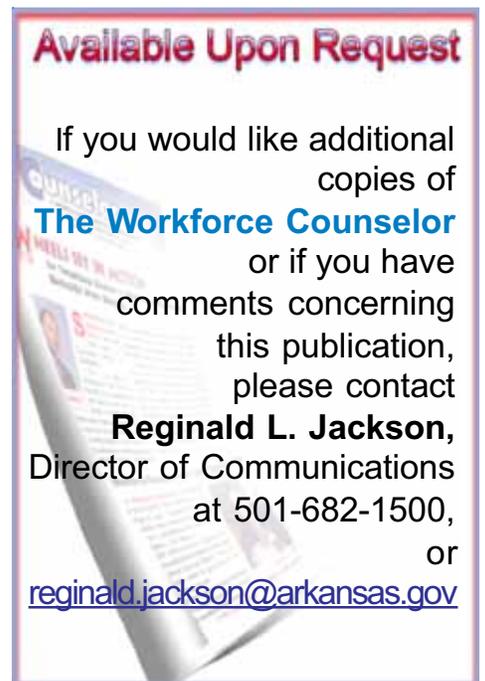
Additionally, PBL promotes a sense of civic and personal responsibility.

A PBL Virtual Chapter exists for those students who are enrolled in a postsecondary institution that does not have a local PBL chapter, giving these students a chance to participate in PBL activities.

FBLA-PBL Professional Division is for anyone who has an interest in and supports the goals of FBLA-PBL. It is comprised of former members, employers, educators, parents, school administrators, business people and community supporters. Professional members can help FBLA-PBL members make the school-to-career transition by serving as mentors, providing internships or job shadowing opportunities, arranging tours of local businesses, networking with media contacts and fundraising. FBLA-PBL is considered the premier student business association in the country.

Available Upon Request

If you would like additional copies of **The Workforce Counselor** or if you have comments concerning this publication, please contact **Reginald L. Jackson**, Director of Communications at 501-682-1500, or reginald.jackson@arkansas.gov



WALKER continued from page 2

areas of our state where we may never have had much of an impact. In achieving the Governor's expectations of raising the bar, this agency must raise the number of students participating in career and technical education and training; we must raise the level of graduation rates of those pursuing their GED diplomas; we must increase the number of citizens we're assisting in our state Rehabilitation field offices. In essence, we must do more for our people, our *workforce people*, the people that WE serve, the future workforce of the 21st century.

Under Governor Beebe's leadership and vision, and with our collective efforts, the Department of Workforce Education will implement a plan that will have a major impact improving the level of education and training in our current and future workforce. I

am committed to raising this state's level of literacy from the lower rung in the nation, to striving to be #1 in literacy, #1 in training and #1 in jobs, because a trained workforce and an educated workforce, is an EMPLOYED workforce. Once more people in our state are better educated and better trained, more businesses and more industries will take a stronger, longer, harder look at Arkansas and realize there is no better location to build and grow their businesses than right here with the best workforce anywhere in the country.

We will help Governor Beebe achieve his vision, and help shape his legacy, through the work we do through this agency. That is our goal and that is our promise of Raising the Bar for the workforce of the 21st century.

FFA Holds Leadership Conference July 9 -20

Camp Couchdale was the site for approximately 500 students from around the state who are members of their local Future Farmers of America chapters, to join together and learn what it takes to be leaders in their communities.

Sponsored by DWE's Agriculture Science and Technology Department, two week-long conferences were held to accommodate all participants. Program Manager Marion Fletcher says of this year's group, "I saw a great deal of potential in the students who attended, and expect to see great things come from their experiences at Conference."



FFA collects for food bank

The Future Farmers of America challenged its members during the 2007 Leadership Conference held July 9-20 at Camp Couchdale, to collect cereal and other goods throughout the coming year to be given to food banks around the state. In the two weeks of the conference, students had already amassed the food shown above.

LEADERSHIP
CHARACTER
AGRICULTURE
THRIFT
RECREATION

COOPERATION
SCHOLARSHIP
CITIZENSHIP
SERVICE
PATRIOTISM

FFA

Delta Region Rehabilitation Services Division offices Assist Clients with Job Placement

When one looks at Arkansas's financial picture as a whole, the state is in pretty good shape. At the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2007), the state ended up with close to a 1 billion dollar surplus on the books. That's about \$75-80 million more than even the experts predicted.

The economic picture looks different to some than others, depending on your point of view. Those in Little Rock and Northwest Arkansas might see a more positive picture than those in the Arkansas Delta. But if you look again and closer this time, you'll see where things are on the upswing.

The Delta economy has been chronicled time after time in many different forums, and most paint it as "Delta blues." Yet, all blues aren't slow and, in fact, around Helena-West Helena, they're singing a brighter, more up-tempo tune these days with some of the positive things that have been happening.

For the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education's Rehabilitation Services division offices in Helena-West Helena, West Memphis and Jonesboro, the area's economy is a constant concern. In order to fulfill the agency's mission of putting people with disabilities to work, **counselors are committed to**



(l-r) District II Manager **Christie Bartlett**, and District III Manager **Sterling Hughes**

searching for employment options available for clients who are seeking a better future for themselves and their families.

While transportation issues cloud the view of many in the Delta, a bright light shining on the Helena-West Helena horizon is "City Links."

"City Links is a transportation service that's less than a year old," says Department of Workforce Education Rehabilitation Services division counselor Laurie McLendon. "It has helped transcend the old boundaries of Helena and West Helena now that they are one city," she said. "For a dollar each way, a client can get a bus ride from any of 33 pre-determined stops around town and get where they need to go."

Reliable public transportation positively

impacts workers and the work force. "A client who has a way to get to and from work helps us," McLendon continued. "After we assist a client attain the needed educational training and subsequent job placement, reliable public transportation helps them keep working and will help future clients who are placed in employment," she continued.

Another Delta positive is in the works with the **RBE Arkansas project and the Helena Port.** RBE Arkansas

will become a primary tenant at the Helena Slackwater Harbor, producing food grade meal, alternative fuel and fish pellets. The RBE Arkansas business plan calls for the plant to have an inclusive power plant to provide its own electricity. Construction estimates project 1000 jobs when they break ground and the 4-year construction phase gets underway. Once fully operational, 500 permanent jobs will be in place.

"That's good news," says Department of Workforce Education Rehabilitation Services division District Manager Sterling Hughes, whose region includes Helena-West Helena. "One project like that is a real shot in the arm to the area economy and our clients because of the spin off effect that occurs when that much

Quality of Life Changes for the Better for Chair Lift Recipient

Courtney Ward, the 17-year old Arkansas High School student from Texarkana, says her life has changed “dramatically” since the Arkansas SkillsUSA State Championships in Hot Springs this past spring. In just a few short months, Courtney has found a new meaning for the word *mobility* and says, “I never thought the day would come when I’d be able to go anywhere I wanted to.”

Arkansas Department of Workforce Education Director William L. “Bill” Walker was in the audience in Hot Springs and watched as a video touting Courtney’s need for a wheelchair lift was shown to the audience. The video was a plea for fellow SkillsUSA members and chapters to rally around Courtney and help raise money to get her a lift for her wheelchair. Shortly after the video was shown, Walker told the crowd gathered that the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education’s Rehabilitation Services division would assist Courtney and her family. His actions set the wheels into motion for her to get a lift for her parent’s vehicle.

Today, Courtney expounded on her new found independence. “Having a lift to put my wheelchair into my parent’s car makes it easier for me to go to school when it rains,” she said.

Before getting the lift and other adaptive technology equipment, Courtney’s family had to load her electric wheelchair onto a utility trailer and tow it behind their vehicle to get her to school. Rainy

days often meant that Courtney had to stay at home. Now, not only can she go to school regularly, but having the lift has opened new doors for her.

“I can go and do things I haven’t been able to do before. It’s a new experience and I like it. I’m so thankful for it and grateful to the Department of Workforce Education’s Rehabilitation Services,” she said. I never thought I’d get anything like this to help me get around.”

During the evaluation process to get the equipment Courtney needed for her lift, the Successful Employment Through Assistive Technology (SEAT) evaluation team also determined that Courtney’s home could use a shower lift chair to make bathing easier for her. Courtney said that was another unexpected bonus.

“The best thing about the shower lift chair is I don’t feel like I’m going to fall anymore when I’m taking a shower. It sure makes it a lot easier and makes me feel more secure,” Courtney said.

Another benefit of the shower chair and wheelchair

lift for Courtney is she’s able to take both of them along with her when she visits her father. “Now I can go to my dad’s home and not leave them behind,” Courtney said. “I’m so thankful for both of those items. They mean so much to me in changing my life. Both items allow me to do the things that I want to and need to do but couldn’t do before. It’s a new-found independence.”

Courtney Ward spoke by phone to Communications’ Carl Enna and relayed these impressions:

Of the Shower Chair Lift:
It doesn’t make me feel like I’m about to fall when I take a shower... It sure makes it a lot easier... it’s a secure feeling.

[It] helps me be able to go where I want to go...Now I can go to my dad’s and not have to leave it behind.

Of the Van Lift:
It gives me a new meaning of mobility as far as getting around. I can go and do things I haven’t been able to do before.

I never thought I’d get anything like this to help me get around... They both allow me to do things I need and want to do and couldn’t do before.

Dates to Remember for August - October 2007

- An Arkansas Apprenticeship Coordinating Steering Committee (AACSC)** Sub Committee Meeting will be held on August 23rd. For more information contact Jonathan Bibb, Office of Apprenticeship and Applied Sciences at (501) 682-1360 or at jonathan.bibb@arkansas.gov
- Marketing In-service for marketing instructors** will be held at Mount Magazine September 6 and 7. For additional information, contact Jim Brock at (501) 682-1768 or at james.brock@arkansas.gov.
- New Teacher In-service for Arkansas business teachers** will be held September 11 and 12th at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway. For additional information, contact Kendra Rice at (501) 682-1768 or at kendra.rice@arkansas.gov.
- DECA State Executive Council meeting** will be held September 16 and 17 in Rogers. For additional information, contact Jim Brock at (501) 682-1768 or at james.brock@arkansas.gov.
- New Career Orientation Teacher In-service** will be held September 17 and 18 in Hot Springs. For additional information, contact Ray Henson at (501) 682-1616 or at raymond.henson@arkansas.gov
- Family and Consumer Sciences New Teacher In-service** will be held at the Arkansas 4-H Center in Ferndale September 18 and 19. For additional information, contact Suellen Ward at (501) 682-1115 or at suellen.ward@arkansas.gov.
- National FFA Camp Directors Conference** will be held in Hardinsburg, Kentucky, September 24 through 26. For additional information, contact Marion Fletcher at (501) 682-2561 or at marion.fletcher@arkansas.gov.
- FBLA District III Senior High Fall Conference** will be held on September 25 at the Pine Bluff Convention Center. For additional information, contact Jim Brock at (501) 682-1768 or at james.brock@arkansas.gov.
- FBLA District III Middle Level Fall Conference** will be held at the Pine Bluff Convention Center on September 25. For additional information, contact Jim Brock at (501) 682-1768 or at james.brock@arkansas.gov.
- FBLA District V Senior High Fall Conference** will be held at UCA in Conway on September 26. For additional information, contact Jim Brock at (501) 682-1768 or at james.brock@arkansas.gov.
- FBLA District I Senior High Fall Conference** will be held in Jonesboro on September 27. For additional information, contact Jim Brock at (501) 682-1768 or at james.brock@arkansas.gov.
- FBLA District II Middle Level Fall Conference** will be held in Jonesboro on September 27. For additional information, contact Jim Brock at (501) 682-1768 or at james.brock@arkansas.gov.
- FBLA District IV Middle Level Fall Conference** will be held October 1 at Henderson State University in Arkadelphia. For additional information, contact Jim Brock at (501) 682-1768 or at james.brock@arkansas.gov.
- FBLA District IV Senior High Fall Conference** will be held October 2 at Henderson State University in Arkadelphia. For additional information, contact Jim Brock at (501) 682-1768 or at james.brock@arkansas.gov.
- FBLA District I Middle Level Fall Conference** will be held October 3 at the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith. For additional information, contact Jim Brock at (501) 682-1768 or at

DWE/ARS Profile: *Judy Smith*

ARS Transition Services Director



Place of Birth: Ville Platte, Louisiana

Pet Peeve: People who lie, when the truth would have sufficed

Favorite Music: Patti Labelle, Joss Stone, Nora Jones & Alicia Keyes

Favorite Vacation: Any place with my sisters

Favorite Food: All things Cajun, anything with rice and asparagus

Favorite Movie: I simply love movies but some of my favorite are: *DreamGirls*, *Terms of Endearment*, *Steele Magnolias*, *Ray* and *A Time to Kill*

When I retire: Travel, volunteer, visit with my grandson as often as possible, fish with my husband and grandson, write, and maybe go to law school

Family: A husband of 32 years, two sons and one grandson

My Job Is: A tremendous opportunity to help improve the lives of God's children

If I Had a Choice, I'd Rather Be ... Teaching my grandson something new, spending time with my children, siblings, or having fun with my girlfriends

My Favorite Books: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, by Zora Neale Hurston and *Poisonwood Bible*, by Barbara Kingsolver

My Favorite Hobbies Are: Reading, Exercising, watching Soaps, CNN & Fox

Favorite Season of the Year: Fall

Favorite All Time TV Show: *Six Feet Under*

What Motivates Me: Being alive and of sound mind motivates me; my childhood experiences motivate me; people in need of assistance, guidance and people in need of the information necessary to improve their quality of life motivates me; the realization that my purpose for being is to help improve the lives of others motivates me; my gratitude for all of my experiences, good and bad, motivates me. Trying to live my life in preparation for heaven motivates me.

DWE/ARS Profile: *Mary Castillow*

DWE Federal Surplus
Property Accountant

Place of Birth: Jonesboro, Arkansas

Pet Peeve: Pushy, know-it-all people

Favorite Music: Southern Gospel

Favorite Vacation: Caribbean Cruise

Favorite Food: Meatloaf, purple hull peas, sliced tomatoes

Favorite Movie: *Shrek*

When I retire: I want to travel and do volunteer work

Family: Husband, Robert, son, Jason, 2 grandchildren, Jordan and Haley, 3 dogs, Chester, Eli and Bear, 1 cat, Tugger

My Job Is: Very demanding, but satisfying

If I Had a Choice, I'd Rather Be ... Traveling

My Favorite Books: *The Bible*, and *Purpose Driven Life*

My Favorite Hobbies Are: Cooking, traveling, and gardening

Favorite Season of the Year: Spring, when the flowers bloom and the garden starts growing

Favorite All Time TV Show: *Jeopardy*

What Motivates Me: Seeing a job well done



Once a fuel tanker...now a fire truck



The Arkansas Department of Workforce Education's Federal Surplus Property Division provided this donated fuel tanker to the City of Winchester Fire Department. The tanker was painted and converted into one of the city's fire trucks. For additional information regarding the Federal Surplus Property program, contact James Smith, Manager, at 501-835-3111 or at log on to <http://dwe.arkansas.gov/FSP.htm>.

Federal Surplus Property SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT!!

The Arkansas Department of Workforce Education's Federal Surplus Property Program has had its best year in history. The treasury is in the best shape due to the donation of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) trailers and mobile homes. Federal Surplus Property would like to pass the program's success on to those who mean so much to us – the donee organizations and their representatives. With that in mind DWE/FSP is offering the following:

Administrative Handling Charge-50% OFF
Starts: Wednesday, August 1, 2007, 7:30 AM
Ends: Wednesday, August 15, 2007, 4:30 PM

That is correct on everything except what is listed below in the "The Rules of the Game". Yes, ~~\$0.50~~ now \$0.25, ~~\$15,000~~ now \$7,500, ~~\$25,000~~ now \$12,500, and so on.

RULES OF THE GAME!!

Do's:

1. Only applies to property of record before July 1, 2007
2. Donee must have a need for the property
3. Donees should bring their own batteries and mechanics to start motorized property and

assist with loading

4. The property must be put into use within 12 months of the dated invoice and used an additional 18 months
5. Donee must bring a truck/trailer to acquire property
6. Plan to be finished loading and signed out by 3:30 each day

Don'ts:

1. Does not apply to property already invoiced
2. Does not apply to travel trailers
3. Does not apply to mobile homes
4. Does not apply to GSAAuctions.gov property
5. **NO HOLDS** on this -- come and get it please!
6. Do not arrive at 4:30 expecting to acquire property – we must leave at that time, it is the law.

Please bring your truck, trailers, help, mechanics, and strap materials for this activity. A special thank you goes to all donees for allowing Federal Surplus Property to reach this milestone where we can give back. For additional information, contact James Smith, Manager, at 501-835-3111, or email jim.smith@arkansas.gov.

Loan Forgiveness

assists Rehabilitation Services Counselors in paying back student loans

The Arkansas Department of Workforce Education's Rehabilitation Services Division has a new tool in its arsenal to recruit counselors. It's money!

During the 2007 Arkansas General Assembly, state Representative Pam Adcock (D-District 35) authored the Student Loan Forgiveness bill as an incentive for graduates with a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling to consider state employment versus the private sector.

"Under the Loan Forgiveness program, a counselor can get help on payback of his or her student loan in exchange for a time commitment to work for us," explained Rehabilitation Services Division Commissioner Robert Treviño. "For every year that a counselor commits to the agency, the state will pay down \$2000 of the entire loan amount up to \$10,000. Repayment of the loan goes directly to the counselor's lending institution," Trevino added.

Another valuable tool to enhance recruitment and retention is an enhanced salary grid for new and current counseling staff. As part of his commitment to raise counselor pay, Commissioner Trevino joined with Representative Adcock and Arkansas Rehabilitation Association members to come up with a plan to adjust counselor pay to better reflect the market value of counselors. The Rehabilitation Services Division will ensure that the salary structure is adjusted for normal inflation which helps the agency stay competitive with the private sector.

Trevino went on to say that "our counselors serve in the agency to satisfy their passion for helping people with disabilities and we have an obligation to support those who support our clients. Once both of these tools are in place, the higher base salaries and the loan forgiveness program should give us a competitive advantage in recruiting and retaining new counselors."



Rep. Pam Adcock

WRIGHT *continued from page 4*

necessary accommodations. The PAVR program was in effect for approximately six years, at which time she moved to Employability Services.

"Gwen is a very special person," writes one colleague. "She is exceptional when it comes to working with students... [she] has the ability to really make a difference in the lives of our students. She has truly been an inspiration for staff and students."

Wright believed that she had a responsibility to "give back" when she took the job, and today is also inspired in watching students learn to help themselves, to use their abilities toward independence, and enjoys "helping others to *feel good*," she explains. She believes that, even if opportunities appear not to be available, there is something you can do to find them out there. One of her favorite sayings is, "When the student is ready, the teacher will appear."

Of her selection as this month's top employee, Wright wants to thank her co-workers and express her honor and pleasure, even though she feels "there are so many people here who deserve this."

With almost 37 years credited to her career, Wright will be retiring at the end of August. She hopes to take it easy at first, spending time with her husband, Raymond, their two sons and two grandsons, but eventually she will find some work to do, claiming "I have to work... I'm a 'giver' and can't just do *nothing*."

SKILLS *continued from page 1*

Arkansas was represented by approximately 260 students from across the state. The students were enrolled in technical training programs and earned the right to participate in the annual SkillsUSA National Conference by winning gold medals at the state championships back in April.

Arkansas's SkillsUSA state gold medal champions competed in any number of the 87 hands-on national championship contests held. The following students won medals in the following events:

🏆 GOLD MEDAL

Outstanding Chapter in the College/Postsecondary division: **Rebekah Withem - Saline County Career Center Team A - Bauxite**

🏆 SILVER MEDAL

Medical Math/ High School Division: **Blake Richardson - SAU Tech Career Academy in Fordyce**

🏆 BRONZE MEDAL

Most Outstanding Opening and Closing Ceremonies College/Postsecondary division: **Saline County Career Center Team F - Bauxite**

Several members of the Department of Workforce Education staff attended the conference. **William L. "Bill" Walker, Jr.**, Director of the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education, was in attendance along with **Reginald L. Jackson**, DWE Director of Communications, **Dick Burchett**, Program Manager, **Randy**

Prather, SkillsUSA State Director, and **James Smith**, Manager of ADWE's Federal Surplus Property.

"I was really impressed with the excitement, level of enthusiasm and motivation all of the SkillsUSA participants showed during the competition," said Director Walker. "The kids' great attitudes and dedication to excellence truly showed. I was very proud of the competing champions from Arkansas, and enjoyed watching the best and brightest from our state compete on the national stage," he added.

Founded in 1965 as VICA (Vocational Industrial Clubs of America), **SkillsUSA is a partnership of students, teachers and industry representatives working together to ensure America has a highly skilled work force.** It is a national, non-profit organization serving teachers, high school and college students preparing for careers in trade, technical and skilled service occupations, including health occupations.

SkillsUSA programs help establish industry standards for job skill training in the classroom and in labs, and promote community service. The organization is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, and cited as a "successful model of employer-driven youth development training program" by the U.S. Department of Labor.

SkillsUSA boasts a national membership of more than 285,000 annually.

"I would like to see more of our student population in Arkansas join student organizations like SkillsUSA," said Director Walker. "Studies show that when students participate in career and technical education programs like SkillsUSA (and other student organizations), they outperform those who are not in career and technical education in many categories, including leadership and participating as a member of a team," he added.

A recently released 5-year study, conducted by the Department of Workforce Education, showed that *career and technical education students who complete a pathway major increased 38% over the 5 year study, and the number of those career and technical education completers entering college increased by 47%.*

SkillsUSA members also score high in the areas of *pride in schoolwork, importance placed in grades, high value on learning and having the abilities to complete work.* In a survey of over 3,500 SkillsUSA members, students were asked what was the most important benefit of being a member of SkillsUSA. Fifty-nine percent ranked "gave me confidence" as their first or second choice. Most ranked "learning to be a leader" as their third choice.

For additional information on SkillsUSA, contact Arkansas SkillsUSA State Director Randy Prather, at 501-682-1125 or email at randy.prather@arkansas.gov.



Mr. Michael Peterson, Principal/Coordinator, Metropolitan Career-Technical Center, & Director Walker



Director William L. "Bill" Walker, Jr.



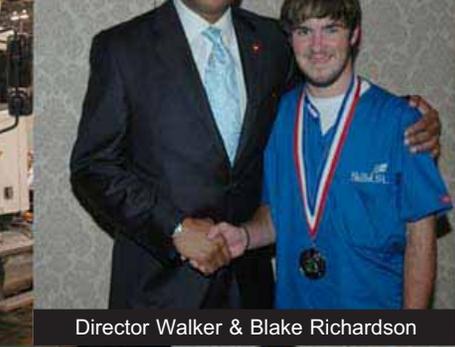
Mr. Peterson, Director Walker, Dick Burchett



SkillsUSA



Director Walker with National Competitors



Director Walker & Blake Richardson



Director Walker with National Competitors



Director Walker, SkillsUSA Executive Director Tim Lawrence, & Dick Burchette



Director Walker & Carla Lancaster

photo collage designed by Trina Harris



Dick Burchett, Rebekah Withem, Director Walker & Randy Prather



Director Walker & Cody Bounds

June 26-30



Danielle Vickers, Director Walker & Linda Taylor



SkillsUSA State Officers

(l-r) Neal Rankin, Joana Murcia, Hector Bello, Niki Barnhouse, Director Walker, Allie Ward, Brittany Gamble, Jamie Cole, Brittany Beird



Director Walker, Blake Richardson, Relda Steelman & Randy Prather



Dick Burchett, Director Walker & Randy Prather



SkillsUSA National Medal Winners

(l-r) Rebekah Withem, Daphne Powell, Amanda Zulpo, Meredith Childress, Camille Bailey, Director Walker, Amanda Charton, Brittany Metzger, Blake Richardson, Edna Night



Director Walker, Dick Burchett, Randy Prather & Neil Rankin

photo collage designed by Trina Harris

Retirees honored for exemplary service

June turned out to be a month full of farewells to co-workers retiring from state government, many with knowledge and expertise honed over several decades of dedicated service.

During one send-off, (*top right*) Department of Workforce Education Director **Bill Walker**, left, and Arkansas Rehabilitation Services Division Commissioner **Bob Treviño**, right, posed with retiring DWE/ARS District Manager **Montie Lumpkin** at the June 25th district managers meeting in Little Rock. It was the first opportunity for Director Walker to meet with the district managers and to share with them his unified vision for DWE/ARS. During the meeting, Director Walker presented Lumpkin with a plaque commemorating his 34 years of service to the state.



Director Walker, Montie Lumpkin, Commissioner Treviño

Also celebrating with colleagues were (*clockwise from middle right*) **Linda Myers** with DWE's Federal Surplus Property department, who received her certificate from supervisor Jim Smith for her 26 years of state service; **Sandra Belt**, secretary at the ARS Fort Smith office and a 28-year staffer, accepted her plaque from retiring District Manager Lumpkin; **Wayne Marsac**, retiring after 37 years of service to ARS, was presented a plaque and letter from the governor by Commissioner Treviño; and **Sharon Harper**, who was retiring after 18 years of state service from DWE's Agriculture Education division.



Jim Smith, Linda Myers



Sandra Belt, Montie Lumpkin



Sharon Harper

Commissioner Treviño, Wayne Marsac

Arkansas Association of Career and Technical Education (ACTE) Summer Conference

The Arkansas Association of Career and Technical Education and the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education held its 77th Annual Professional Development Conference July 29 through July 31 at the Hot Springs Convention Center and the Embassy Suites Hotel. The conference was an opportunity for career and technical education teachers to come together along with staff from the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education. The theme for the conference was “**Today an Education, Tomorrow a Career.**”

John Davidson, Arkansas Department of Workforce Education Deputy Director for Career and Technical Education, stated, “The ACTE summer conference is one of the most important professional development events of the year for Career and Technical Education Teachers. This event is successful because of the partnership between the Arkansas Career and Technical Association and the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education. We are a team, and success only happens as we work together to strengthen the ties between our agency and the Career and Technical Education teachers of our state.”

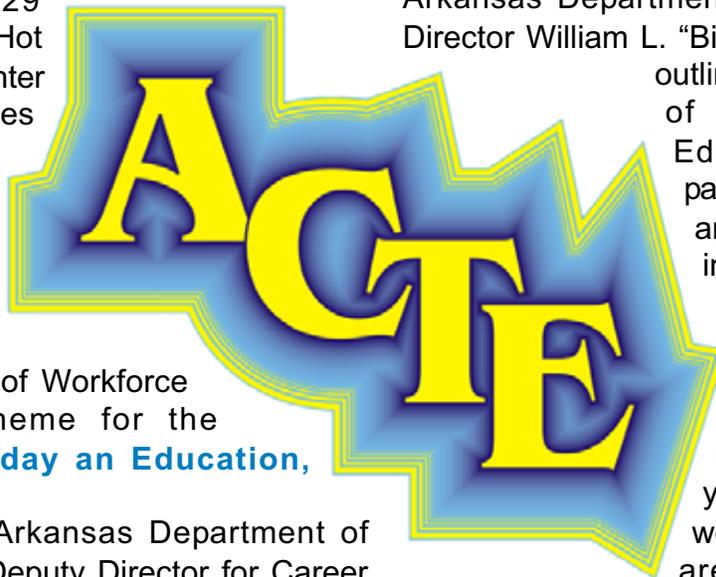
The event kicked off with inspirational leadership speaker Byron Garrett giving the keynote address during the opening session, followed by divisional meetings, computer workshops, CPR workshops and breakout sessions. Some of the workshop sessions conference attendees had a chance to participate in were: *Special Populations for CTE Teacher; Recruiting and Retraining Non-Traditional*

Students; Perkins for Teachers; and Change the Hero Within, Your Life and your Legacy.

Conference attendees also had an opportunity to participate in a special breakout session led by Arkansas Department of Workforce Education Director William L. “Bill” Walker. Director Walker outlined his vision of the future of Career and Technical Education in Arkansas and participated in a lively question and answer session with the instructors.

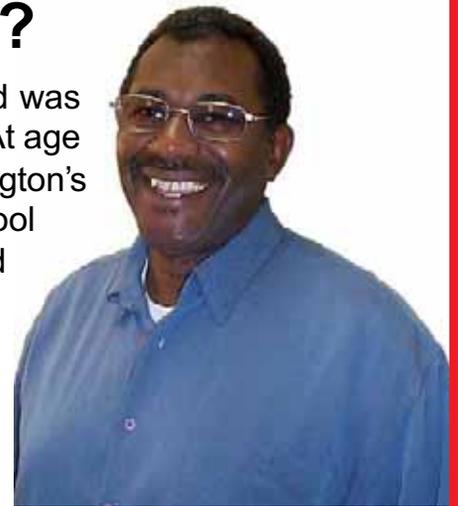
“You are the pipeline for the workforce of the future,” Walker told the enthusiastic crowd assembled. “Through all of you flows Arkansas’s future workforce. The students you are educating and training today will eventually become tomorrow’s workers. The workplace of today will evolve in response to changing expectations and marketplace demands. We, in Career and Technical Education, must constantly be on the cutting edge with vision and foresight to ensure Arkansas students are high performance, well prepared, work-place ready graduates eager to tackle the challenges of a 21st century economy,” he added.

The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) was founded in 1926. ACTE is the largest national association dedicated to the advancement of education that prepares youth and adults for successful careers. The strength of ACTE is reflected in its diverse membership composed of over 30,000 career and technical educators, administrators, researchers, guidance counselors and others involved in planning and conducting career and technical education programs at the secondary, post-secondary and adult level.



Who is Malcolm Washington?

Malcolm Washington was the 12th of 13 children and was forced to drop out of school at an early age to work. At age 50 and having been out of school for 33 years, Washington's supervisor told him that his position would require a high school diploma. With supportive supervisors who promised they would hold his job and stand by him every step of the way, Washington attended classes at Saline County Adult Education Center, calling his teachers "angels in disguise." Washington met the challenge and earned his *Arkansas High School Diploma*. His ultimate dream is to attend a Bible college and become a foreign missionary.



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DELTA continued from page 9

money gets poured into the local economy. The total economy grows and that is good for everybody," he commented.

In Marmaduke, a city located between Paragould and Piggott, American Railcar Industries announced, at a recent groundbreaking, a \$51 million dollar, 300 person job expansion. The groundbreaking was for a flexible manufacturing facility that will produce covered hopper railcars, intermodal railcars and tank cars. In all, there are three different expansions going on for American Railcar at the Marmaduke location and at their facility in Paragould.

Governor Mike Beebe joined company officials and local leaders for the July 25 announcement and called the American Railcar expansion "an integral part of our economic development strategy." The Governor added, "This significant investment is not only a sign of ARI's success, but also of their

confidence in the capable workforce of Northeast Arkansas."

Department of Workforce Education Rehabilitation Services division District Manager Christie Bartlett, who oversees the Jonesboro, Batesville and West Memphis offices, sees the American Railcar expansion as a blessing in her area.

"American Railcar has long been a friend to Rehabilitation Services division clients; they believe in our clients' potential and have hired clients from us before. There is no reason to think that we can't place more clients as part of this ARI expansion," she said.

"We use the area Vocational Technical schools for training when we can to help get our clients ready for jobs. When it's time for placement, the training the clients received helps them to be more competitive during the hiring process," she added.

VISION continued from page 1

we had a better working knowledge of how other divisions in our own agency operated, we could have saved taxpayer money by streamlining our operations,” Walker explained.

In explaining how things will work, Walker challenged each employee to “raise the bar” in their level of service.

“We have been charged by Governor Mike Beebe to raise the bar even higher in how we serve our clients and customers,” Walker said. “We will begin to accomplish this by increasing our level of visibility, so that even more Arkansans will turn to us to help them achieve a better and higher quality of life. We will do more, to reach more, to ultimately serve more,” he added.

Several special guests were in attendance for Director Walker’s presentation. State Representative Pam Adcock and State Representative Linda Chesterfield, both of Little Rock, and Sarah Agee, Governor Beebe’s liaison

to the agency, were in attendance. Walker thanked them for attending and for their continued support of the agency.

Several Department of Workforce Education employees were also

honored during the event for their years of service to the agency. Director Walker thanked them for their hard work

(from top) State Representative Pam Adcock spoke of her dedication to

the department’s mission; Director Walker presented DWE career service certificates to staff members including Ida Creed, who has served with dedication for 35 years; and Governor Beebe’s liaison to DWE, Sarah Agee, enjoyed meeting more of the agency staff.

and dedication and presented framed awards to James Brock, James Clark, Catherine Crowder and Joseph Harris for five years with the agency. Karen Chisholm and Betty Mitchell were honored with 10-year awards.

Twenty-year veterans included Clarence Campbell, Mary Castillow, Michael Harris and Linda Myers. Ida Jo Creed was recognized for her 35 years with the agency.

Before the end of the meeting, Walker reminded all the employees of the agency’s mission of providing leadership and contributing resources to serve the diverse and changing career and educational needs of the youth and adults of Arkansas. Additionally, Arkansans with disabilities are provided opportunities to work and to lead productive and independent lives through Arkansas Rehabilitation Services.

“We are the **education** and **rehabilitation** in workforce,” he said. “Our agency is unique in its mission, its scope, its vision and its purpose of educating, preparing and training Arkansas’s diverse workforce for the 21st century. We have a great team assembled in this room doing many great things throughout the state already. We will continue to raise the bar and raise the level of excellence in how we serve the citizens of our state. We are all one family, and we are here to work together. From this day forward we will operate as one unit, one family, with one vision and one voice.”



Cook **Joe Watson** from Hot Springs Rehabilitation Center’s Dietary Services practices his art to provide the staff a delicious meal.



Retired DWE/ARS Program Manager **Thirland “Danny” McKissic** wowed the room with an inspirational song.



Business and Marketing Technology Program

Staying ahead of the Curve for the 21st Century

In many ways, the Business and Marketing Technology program of the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education's Career and Technical Education section is not only keeping up with the Joneses, it's working hard to keep a step ahead of them. And that's quite a feat in the ever-changing world of business and marketing technology because change seems to be happening on an hour to hour, rather than day to day, basis.

Program Manager Sandra Porter says the Business and Marketing Technology staff works hard to keep Arkansas's program one of the premier programs in the nation, and to do that, it takes some forward thinking.

"We have to keep an eye on what's ahead and we must plan for changes to keep up with the trends in industry," Porter said. "For example, on January 1, 2008, there will be no more instruction in Windows XP or Office 2003; everything will go to Microsoft Office 2007 and the new Vista operating system. We have to be ready, working ahead of the curve, to have our teachers ready through in-service training, so they, in turn, can teach how the new software works," she said. "The software is ever-changing, so our teachers, throughout the state, have to know how to use it

and be prepared to teach it; that's what our department does through our in-service training. Some of the change is driven by Federal changes in Perkins IV," Porter added.

The Business and Marketing Program is supporting the effort for teachers in Arkansas to achieve two computer certifications: IC-3 and MOS (Microsoft Office Specialist) certifications. The IC-3 certification calls for teachers to become proficient, and pass testing in three phases of industry standards:

- ▶ **Fundamentals** (hardware, software and operating systems)
- ▶ **Key Applications** (common program, word processing and spreadsheet functions)
- ▶ **Living Online** (networks and the internet, electronic mail, using the internet and the impact of computing on society)

The MOS certification proves proficiency in each MS Office application (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.) via a competency exam. Teachers, in turn, teach students these programs, and the students must pass an exam showing the depth of their knowledge for each product. A student, armed with an MOS specialist designation, offers a prospective business an

employee who is trained and proficient to a point of certification. A business interested in hiring someone with an MOS specialist certification, gives the prospective employee a leg up on the competition, and the business someone who is already trained and ready to go to work, not someone ready to be trained.

"The Lincoln School District has been using the MOS certification program for 5 years now and their graduates have a distinct, documented successful advantage," Porter commented.

What else is ahead, looking around the proverbial curve?

"The big push now is for industry certification and digi-tools, like speech and handwriting recognition programs," Porter surmises. "We see the demand for speech and handwriting software on the horizon and we have to be ready to teach these applications," she said.

"There have been two In-Service Seminars this summer that are in demand," Porter explained. "They are Prosoft Learning Web-Design I and II. Each course is 5 days and the instructors, who complete the training, will be able to teach Web Design, something that's constantly in demand," Porter says.

The Business and Marketing
BUSINESS continued on page 25

Young Leaders Gather for Youth Leadership Forum at UCA

It was another successful year for the Youth Leadership Forum, presented by the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education's Rehabilitation Services Division and the Governor's Commission on People with Disabilities. The 9th Annual Forum was held July 9 through 13 on the campus of the University of Central Arkansas in Conway with 13 delegates participating. They are: **Raymond Harrison** from Little Rock; **Jimmie Rivers** from Camden; **Kristi Morris** from Camden; **Derrell Daniels**, **Kendric Rice**, **Addison Baker**, and **David Howell**, all from North Little Rock; **Sharlie-Kay Barlow** from Mena; **Christopher Grusing** from Hasty; **Crystal Abels** from Helena-West Helena; **Joanna Creal-Ward** from Pine Bluff; **Katrier Coleman**

from Dermott; and **Dylan Nulph** from Clinton. Four peer counselors also participated. They are: **Bethany Baldwin** from Maumelle; **Tim Minnie** from Cabot; **Andrew Watson** from Paragould; and **Shanquita Taylor** from Dumas.

YLF delegates and peer counselors enjoyed a week-long schedule of educational and motivational speakers. The four-day conference included a session on "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens," which allows teens to build on the principles of the seven habits through interactive exercises. The group was given information on self-advocacy and making good decisions. They also had a session on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation

Act, and the Fair Housing Act. Additionally, the students discussed present day disability topics, nutrition, employment, emergency preparedness, healthcare and related subjects.

The highlight of the week-long event was on July 12 when the group toured the Arkansas State Capitol. While there, they had an opportunity to meet Governor Mike Beebe and take pictures with him in the Governor's Conference Room.

They also attended a luncheon at the Peabody Hotel where Arkansas First Lady Ginger Beebe was the keynote speaker. Mrs. Beebe encouraged the delegates to continue to develop their leadership skills and take back what they learned to their communities,

YLF continued on page 24



Governor Mike Beebe (seated, center) meets with YLF Delegates, Peer Counselors and supervising staff during their tour of the Capitol Building on July 12. Also pictured: Ida Esh't (third from right, front), Governor's Commission on People with Disabilities Executive Director, and Director Bill Walker (third from right, back row).

YLF continued from page 23

because they are "Arkansas's future." The First Lady recently completed a two-month long, statewide listening tour devoted to children's mental health issues during which she and a team of child health advocates met with more than 80 families.

Department of Workforce Education Director Bill Walker was in attendance, as well as Rehabilitation

Services Division Commissioner Robert Treviño and Sarah Agee, Governor Beebe's liaison to ADWE.

With another great year completed, the hopes are that the thirteen delegates and four peer counselors took home more confidence and knowledge that will help them in whatever endeavors they choose in the future.

Youth Leadership Forum



First Lady Ginger Beebe & Sharlie-Kay Barlow

Arkansas First Lady Ginger Beebe with YLF delegates

June 9-13, 2007

photo collage designed by Trina Harris

Arkansas HOSA Students compete at National Leadership Conference

Arkansas Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) made an impressive showing at the 30th Annual National Leadership Conference June 20 through 23 in Orlando, Florida. Ninety-five students, chaperones and advisors, along with Barbara Dimon, Arkansas Department of Workforce Education Public School Program Advisor and HOSA State Advisor, attended the event. The conference allowed the HOSA members a chance to compete in various medical profession events. In order to qualify for the national competition, students had to place first, second, or third at the Arkansas state competition held this past spring.

Conway High School, Quitman High School, Tuckerman High School, and Conway Area Career Center received recognition for Outstanding HOSA Chapter. Quitman High School and Conway High School received an Award of Merit for either raising funds of \$500 or volunteering 500 hours for HOSA's National Service Project 'Autism Speaks'.

Six Arkansas students finished top ten in their events at the national conference. **Cameron Crane** and **Brad Houtchens** from Gravette High School brought home the bronze medal for placing 3rd overall in the CPR/First Aid event. Gravette students **Aaron Roberts** and **Courtney Estep** placed in the top ten for CPR/First Aid, and **Megan Morrison** placed in the top ten for Extemporaneous Speaking. **Paige Duncan**, from Quitman High School, was a top ten finalist in the Medical Spelling contest.

Conway Area Career Center, Quitman High School, and Tuckerman High School received recognition for participating in National HOSA Week to promote HOSA through community service, knowledge fairs, guest lectures and other health activities.

For more information about Arkansas Health Occupations Students of America, log on to <http://>



(l-r) **Jasmine Jackson**, *President*; **Nekki Kissiri**, *Vice President*; **Mary Ann Wallace**, *Secretary*; **Barbara Dimon**, *HOSA State Director*; **Megan Iske**, *Treasurer*; **Julia Scoggins**, *Historian*, and **Alise Altom**, *Parliamentarian*

dwe.arkansas.gov/HOSA/arkansas_hosa.htm, contact Barbara Dimon, HOSA State Advisor, at (501) 628-1271, or email barbara.dimon@arkansas.gov.

BUSINESS continued from page 22

Web Design pilot program of study is growing each year. Now in its third year, Web Design started year one with 9 schools and has added five additional schools each year. Porter hopes the schools already in place will continue their participation while the Business and Marketing Technology program develops the program statewide, within budgetary guidelines.

"It takes a commitment from the schools, the administration and the students," Porter said. "Staying ahead of the curve for the 21st Century is something that has to be worked at," she concluded.

Senior Management Team

SMT

Update



**New Era
and A New Paradigm**

by Robert Treviño
Rehabilitation Services Division
Commissioner

By any assessment, 2007 is turning out to be a productive year for vocational rehabilitation in Arkansas. 2007 brought Governor Mike Beebe and his promise to the people of our state to lead us into a new era of modern government marked by bold new initiatives. He made good on that promise, in part, by appointing a dynamic leader named Bill Walker to the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education who recognizes the inherent value of professionals working to ensure that people with disabilities compete on a level playing field. His motto is "Raising the Bar," and his expectation is realizing excellence.

As an entrepreneur and a former state Representative and state Senator, Mr. Walker brings a determined energy and robust enthusiasm, but most of all a shared commitment to those consumers who rely on our expertise to help them break the perpetual cycle of poverty when unemployment is accompanied by disability.

As any good coach or business person will tell you, success starts at home and you

can't be successful if you can't field a competitive team. Vocational rehabilitation is no exception. Indeed, our consumers depend on us fielding the best team we can develop. With that reality in mind, Mr. Walker and I partnered with the state's Office of Personnel Management and the legislative leadership of state Representative Pam Adcock and state Senator Terry Smith to ask the Arkansas General Assembly to help achieve four very important goals.

First, we petitioned the legislature to permit us to provide shift differential incentives for our nursing staff at Hot Springs Rehabilitation Center to give them the competitive assistance necessary to ensure that our patients always have experienced nurses as their health care advocates.

Second, the agency joined with Representative Adcock and crafted a new pay plan and student loan payoff for new and experienced field counselors. The plan will soon be unveiled and is an excellent incentive for recruitment and retention. One thing is certain - vocational rehabilitation counselors are

committed to the people we serve and we must commit the resources necessary to support them. To that end, we are reviewing case management strategies to better assist our counselors in order to provide quality time and attention to our consumers. A combination of technology and training are but two considerations to assist us in meeting this goal. But counselors must be an important part of this goal achievement. For our success means the success of our consumers and their success changes people's lives forever.

Third, the agency received permission to institute a more competitive pay scale for our pharmacists at Hot Springs Rehabilitation Center. Regrettably, HSRC pharmacists were slipping behind their private sector counterparts for too long. Fortunately, the legislature permitted us to institute a more competitive wage scale for experienced pharmacists and the agency is confident our new pay posture will keep us competitive with the market.

Fourth, the agency was extremely pleased to obtain the support of Senator Terry Smith

SMT continued on page 27

Three Arkansas high schools get recognition from Regional Education Board

Three Arkansas high schools received national recognition from the **Southern Regional Education Board's High Schools That Work** school reform initiative at the group's summer gathering on July 11 in New Orleans. **Rogers High School** was named a **Pacesetter School**, the highest award that SREB offers. **Springdale High School** was named as an **Honorable Mention** and **Siloam Springs High School** was honored with a **Gold Improvement Award** at the presentation ceremony for showing significant improvement in student achievement.

John Davidson, Deputy Director of Career and Technical Education for the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education, calls the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) "the premier group that holds the largest in-service teacher training in the United States. That makes these awards very prestigious," he said.

The **High Schools That Work (HSTW)** program is an effort-based school

improvement initiative founded on the conviction that most students can master rigorous academic, career and technical studies if school leaders and teachers create an environment that motivates students to make the effort to succeed. The HSTW project is the nation's first, large scale effort to engage state, district and school leaders in partnerships with teachers, students and parents to work within the community to raise student's achievements in both middle and high schools.

The Pacesetter School criteria require numerous steps be achieved. They include: 85% or more of the students achieving one or more of the HSTW performance and curriculum goals. 85% must complete one or more concentrations of career/technical, mathematics/science or humanities and, among other goals, a minimum of 50 graduates must complete the HSTW assessment and achieve an 85% or higher graduation rate.

SMT continued from page 26

as the sponsor of the agency's 2007 General Improvement Fund/Capital Improvement Expenditure request. Sen. Smith's leadership resulted in \$500,000 in new funding for needed repairs to HSRC. Now that the facility enjoys the recognition of residing on the National Historic Register, these funds are more important to the

restoration of our facility than ever before.

Finally, Mr. Walker has an ambitious agenda for the coming years, and we are confident the plans will place us in a stronger position to benefit our consumers. As the world's economy continues to change, so too does our paradigm shift regarding the strategies used to

help people with disabilities achieve full and competitive employment. But with this change, we can be assured that the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education and the Rehabilitation Services Division will work as a unified entity commanding all of its resources for the benefit of our consumers.



Arkansas Department of Workforce Education

State Board of Workforce Education and Career Opportunities

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