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# trc today

*An Employee Newsletter for Texas Rehabilitation Commission*

**Reengineering**

**to**

**Real**

**World**

# trc today

An Employee Newsletter for Texas Rehabilitation Commission

Texas Rehabilitation  
Commission  
4900 N. Lamar Blvd.  
Austin, Texas 78751-2399  
Vol. 20 No. 6 June 1997

## JUNE 2ND *it's the REAL WORLD*

**J**une 2. Here already. After so much preparation, all of us will be relieved to know this: after today you will not read the words reengineering in a TRC publication again. Been there, done that. Hallelujah! The Eagle has landed.

Talk about an ambitious project. Vocational Rehabilitation is a program whose process has remained relatively unchanged for 75 years, until now. Guided by three simple criteria - getting people into services quicker; serving them more efficiently; and helping more of them go to work - TRC looked at VR from every angle.

From input, redesign, testing to training, almost everyone in the field and central office played a part in it's development. Clients, consumers and providers also lent a hand.

"There have been so many people involved in this effort the last several years," says Jackie Feinberg, reengineering project manager. "It was an immense project, but we've done it, and we can feel good about the results."

The end result is a streamlined Rehabilitation Services system that puts clients first. In slicing out needless bureaucracy and taking advantage of new technology, it focuses on better services and more informed choices for clients. Checks and balances are built into automated tools to reduce approvals and errors.

"Three years ago, we knew that this project was important to the future of the VR program. It is still just as vitally important," says Commissioner

### *Old vs. the New System* .....

- ◆ 224 type service codes to 91 type service codes
- ◆ Numerical codes to an English based system
- ◆ Bridge to RSS queries or Intranet reports
- ◆ Paper to electronic TRC forms and manuals
- ◆ Overwhelming detail to essential elements in case notes
- ◆ 16 statuses to 4 phases
- ◆ Best price to best value
- ◆ Repeated input to one time entry of client data
- ◆ Downloading to direct access in remote areas



*Gearing up: Beaumont Area Manager Jerald Stewart and South Austin AST Janice Ging at Region III MIS training.*

Arrell. "The impact may not be immediate, but over the next few years our clients will benefit."

"This new system will change our culture. In some ways it will be painful, but necessary," adds Arrell. "Just like learning to ride a bike, falls are to be expected. You work through the frustration and soon it comes naturally to you."

If the word reengineering is now gone from TRC vocabulary, does that mean that what we have today is final? The answer is NO. There will continue to be enhancements to the system. Like any other piece of software, what we have now will continue to go through refinements as we use the system and find ways to improve it.

## *House approves Rehab Act*

Let's take a step back to September 1995. The VR program narrowly escapes job consolidation in a classic showdown debate on HR 1617.

Now — fast forward to May 1997. Again, a workforce development bill (HR 1385), otherwise known as the "Employment, Training, and Literacy Enhancement Act of 1997," incorporates the VR program. But this time it is different. HR 1385 contains an independent section — Division B — that reauthorizes the Rehabilitation Act for three-years.

On May 15 a serious threat to the proposed reauthorization begins to evolve. Expected to be introduced on May 16, the Souder Amendment (Rep. Mark Souder of Indiana) considers placements in sheltered employment and other segregated settings to be "competitive employment" and allows payment of people in sheltered placements at below minimum wage.

Advocates gear up to counteract.

Suddenly, the House overwhelmingly passes the proposed "Employment, Training, and Literacy Enhancement Act of 1997" with a vote of 343 to 60. The Souder Amendment is not introduced. With a few last-minute changes to the Committee version of the bill, the VR Program is affirmed with a three-year reauthorization.

Now, advocates and others are turning their eyes to the Senate where a bill has yet to be introduced. Basically, at the halfway mark, we are in good shape. Watch for updates of further developments in our next issue.

## Focus on employment ... job hunts go high tech

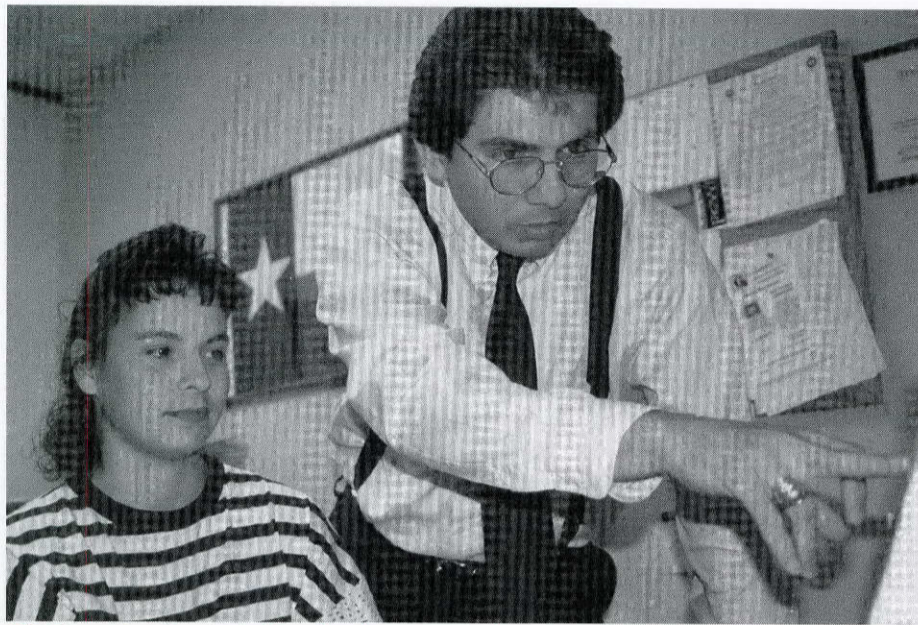
**W**alk into the Corpus Christi Field Office on Monday mornings and you will likely see VRC Demetrio Rosales moving tables, chairs, telephones and setting up computers and printers. Demetrio is setting up a portable lab for clients at a local substance abuse and treatment facility to come into and get serious about finding a job. He coordinates with his colleagues at the Probation Department and brings in a team of Job-Quest trainers to help transition clients to employment in a job-club atmosphere.

"We have good news and bad news," said Demetrio when only one hopeful prospect showed up for the job club. "We usually have 15 people in here using the computers and telephones. The bad news is that only one person showed up today. The good news is that everyone who was here last week is at work on new jobs today." Demetrio's cohorts at the Probation Department call him their "job readiness training" program because he has been so successful at placing clients in employment.

Using a variety of computer software programs and online tools, Demetrio helps his clients set and reach realistic employment goals. Resources such as Choices, TWC Jobs Express, Governor's Job Bank, TEC Online and the online local newspaper help clients recognize their skills and find real jobs in their community. Using icon short-cuts Demetrio created utilizing TRC automation, clients can go straight to the right resource with a simple mouse click.

"Some clients come in with unrealistic ideas for their abilities and the type of work that is available in our community," said Demetrio. "I can use programs like Choices to develop realistic expectations, better match their skills with a job and increase their opportunity to succeed. The process is done interactively with the client, mutually discussing their strengths and weaknesses and their disability. It really helps me help my clients."

After Demetrio and his clients look at their skills, knowledge, abilities, and aptitudes, they can determine how to transfer them directly into the world of work without doing extensive training.



VR Counselor Demetrio Rosales shows TRC client Josie Valles how to use computer resources on the Internet to find jobs in the local area.

### Online resources on your computer desktop:

- Choices can be accessed on computers in TRC field offices through the TRC Work Group. As an automated vocational assessment tool, it provides a quick picture of a client's interests and aptitudes and matches them with specific job titles. It provides rationale why certain jobs might not be appropriate and gives information on colleges, trade schools, and other training facilities.
- These Resources are on the TRC Net page as standard bookmarks:
  - America's Job Bank, Catapult on JobWeb, Governor's Job Bank and Monster Board are bookmarks under Employment.
  - TWC Jobs Express, Governor's Job Bank, and America's Job Bank are available under Government/Legislative when you click on State of Texas Government.

His ability to help clients identify their skills has been so successful that employers welcome his referrals and know he will provide a qualified applicant.

But, Demetrio doesn't stop there. He follows up with the client and employer to assure the match is right and to guard against any problems that might develop. If training is necessary, it is usually short-term training to increase the skill or on-the-job training.

"Training is nothing unless it means employment," said Lauren Brannan, regional program specialist for Region V. "Demetrio's philosophy of 'place and train if necessary' works more effectively than a 'train and place' philosophy. It does not matter what a client's disability is, if you don't have the right match with an employer, you don't have a success. It's that simple."

"The automation coming with the new rehabilitation system is exciting," said Brannan. "The capabilities TRC counselors have online and through the Internet are remarkable. Demetrio is using those resources and working smarter — not harder — to help his clients reach success."

## Statewide MSCs get up to speed in the new Rehab System

**S**ome of TRC's best just keep getting better. On April 29-30, 15 medical service coordinators came to Austin from across the state to learn how to purchase medical services in the new rehabilitation services system. Experts in their field, the group represented more than 120 years of medical services experience in the Commission. They will provide training to counselors and RST teams in their respective regions.

"They were really excited to be able to get together, meet each other in person and compare notes and professional expertise," said Linda Loucks, director of Buyer Support Services. "The training they got is critical since TRC spends \$40-60 million a year in medical services, and they do a large percentage of that purchasing."

"They are excellent ambassadors for TRC to the medical community," said Frankie Watson, Region IV director who also attended the training.



Front row (left to right) - Cathy Bowlin, Vera Craddock, Chris Cochran-Smith, Pat Green; Back row - Sheryl Belloni (physical restoration specialist in Central Office) Freddie Glen, Tina Silgero, Sue Holloway, Sue Wagner, Berta Palacios, Becky Anglemyre, Elia Montelongo, Melisa Sconci, Marjorie Brune, Toni McCoy, Karen Joplin-Smith.

## These reports take on a life of their own

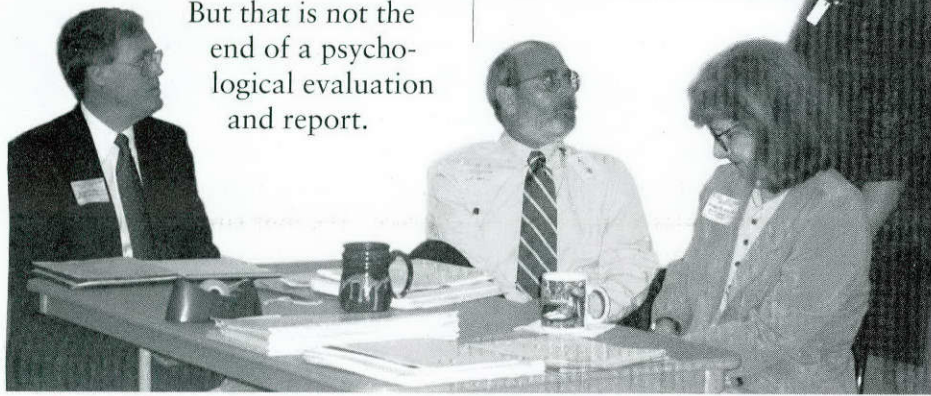
*“Well organized ... and well worth the effort to come.”*

— DR. RAFAEL OTERO OF TEXARKANA

This was the underlying theme communicated to the psychologists who attended a workshop presented by the Texas DDS on April 26. In spite of severe weather and flooding, over one hundred psychologists from Texas and Louisiana attended the workshop held in Austin.

Psychological reports, often ordered at the initial level, help examiners determine eligibility for Social Security or SSI disability benefits for DDS claimants. They may influence decisions through various levels of determination.

But that is not the end of a psychological evaluation and report.



Cindy Kingsley (right), systems manager for Medical Development Services, visits with Dr. Leon Morris, Dr. Henry Hanna, and Dr. Michele Chappuis, presenters at a workshop held for psychological consultative examination providers on April 26. Attendees at “Increasing Accurate Psychological Assessments in Social Security Disability Determinations” received continuing education credit hours from the Texas Psychological Association.

“The findings can be used again in the future in a redetermination or in a continuing disability review,” said Cindy Kingsley, systems manager of Medical Development Services and coordinator for the workshop. “These reports truly do take on a life of their own that can go on for a very long time.”

Steve Schkade, director of Medical Relations, and Kingsley provided opening remarks and introduced a roster of speakers considered to be experts in their field.

Mental retardation, developmental disorders, forensic aspects of the disability evaluation, and test performances and disability assessments were some of the topics covered in presentations by DDS Psychological Consultants Drs. Henry Hanna, Stephen Drake, Michele Chappuis and Leon Morris, consultative examiner from Wichita Falls. Medical Relations Officers, Janie Wilkes, Robert Gips and Jack Pfister were on hand to visit with participants and answer specific questions.

“This was a great outreach endeavor across the state that really worked well,” said Kay Chee, associate commissioner for Administrative Management Services at DDS.

Workshop attendees had many positive comments about the presenters.

“In addition to getting helpful and practical information, participants received four hours of continuing education credits from the Texas Psychological Association,” said Schkade. “That will come back to us in the quality of psychological reports we get from them. We will definitely realize significant improvement in the information we get from the psychologists who attended this workshop.”

## Across the State

### Welcome Aboard

Shubh Dabla, administrative technician  
Alma Farrar, administrative technician  
Elizabeth Hau-Joe, budget analyst  
Mary Ann Carrillo, counselor  
Cheryle Fisher, RST  
Patricia Fulkerson, counselor  
Rebecca Mulroy, counselor  
William Lampen II, systems support spec.  
Daniel Briumann, counselor  
Carmen Garcia, counselor  
Robert Schafer, counselor  
Darla Jasik, secretary  
Anna Alvarado, DST  
Kara Carlson, DST  
Sherice Fisher, HR mgmt. clerk  
Susie Gonzales, clerk  
Suzette Harris, DST  
Gail Jennings, data entry operator  
Mark Juditz, administrative technician  
Alejandro Lopez-Flores, clerk  
Jerry Powers, systems support spec.  
Sharon Reinauer, DST  
Brenda Rocha, clerk  
Rubio Sally, DST  
Bernadette Tamayo, DST  
Tiffany Thielepape, DST  
Alethea Thomas, DST  
Yvonne Thomas, clerk  
Michelle Torres, clerk

### Retirements:

Nan Rose retired from TRC with 21 years of service on May 31, 1997. Nan was a VR counselor in the Paris Field Office.

### Deaths

Friends and co-workers mourn the loss of Ora Ben who passed away on May 3, 1997 after a lengthy illness. Ora, who came to work at TRC in May 1982, was a voucher completion specialist in the DDS Voucher Unit in Austin.

## Congratulations to Sue Arledge

Great big congratulations to Sue Arledge of DDS-Austin! On May 13, Sue celebrated 40 years of public service with TRC.

“I started to work here right out of high school as a stenographer for Mr. Blalock who was the Disability Division director at that time,” said Sue. In 1957, the



Disability Division and Vocational Rehabilitation were about the same size. Sue recalled that there were less than 25 people in DDS and both divisions were together in the same building. Many changes have come around in TRC over the past 40 years and

Sue has had the opportunity to see them all first hand.

Sue worked as administrative secretary to Mr. Blalock during the day and went to college in the evenings until she got her a degree in management. Soon after that, she started working with the budget. Now director of Resource Management, Sue reminded us how

the agency and the people have changed a lot in 40 years. “I have worked with many good people and I have learned a lot from every one of my bosses,” said Sue. “I grew up here. The people here are like family, and I have watched that family grow as I grew.”

“Sue has shown her commitment to the disability program by always asking, ‘How can I help?’” said Dave Ward, deputy commissioner for Disability Determination. “She has been and continues to be a friend and colleague who indeed has contributed greatly to TRC and the people it serves.”

### TRC employees demonstrate spirit of giving . . .

In a ceremony at the Governor’s Mansion on April 7, the State Employees Charitable Campaign (SECC) presented TRC with an award for Highest Participation for a State Agency in its size (1,001 to 5,000 employees). Carolyn Mercer, TRC statewide coordinator, indicated that 27.1 percent of TRC employees pledged this year, representing an increase of 66 percent since 1995.



*. . . 40 years of public service with TRC*

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# trc today

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## State Service Awards June 1997

### 10 Years

Janice Collins  
William Smith  
Betty Ford  
Linda Floege

### 25 Years

Rebecca Vasquez  
Leonor Hernandez  
Verdell Williams  
Barbara Schepman  
Terrence Donovan

### 15 Years

Doris Banks  
Thomas Steffens  
Alma Schion  
Mary Foy  
Helen Taylor  
Jacqueline Merrill

### 30 Years

John Flowers  
Javier Leal

### 20 Years

Roger Levy  
Linda Campbell  
Rosa Broussard  
Judy Sandberg  
Patricia Jackson  
Judy Holliday  
Pamela Lodwick  
Julie Casner

### Correction to past Service Awards:

Esmerelda (Molly) Setterlund celebrated 10 years of state service in April.  
Katherine Rury celebrated 10 years of state service in May.  
Sue Arledge celebrated 40 years of state service in May

