

News & Views

★ Texas Rehabilitation Commission ★ A Human Energy Agency ★

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Future TRC Offices to Have New Look

"In the Texas Rehabilitation Commission five year plan we have as a goal full office automation by the year 1990." So says James Jackson, Deputy Commissioner for Administration.

TRC's leaders are resolved not to be left behind in a world that is progressing faster each day to total automation. Their feeling is that if we do not plan now for what is inevitable, we will not be able to cope.

Jackson hastens to clarify that by "automated offices" he does not mean replacing TRC employees with machines. Rather, he means using automation to help employees do their jobs faster and more efficiently. "Every work station will be equipped with the latest state of the art device to carry out that job function," says Jackson. And here he makes a sharp distinction between the work station itself and the employee.

Despite the fact that automation, for most people, means computer technology of some sort, computer capabilities are not the only types of automation TRC is planning. Depending on the work station, these new devices might be word processors, typewriters, dictaphones, or even copy machines.

A significant amount, however, will be spent on computers in the next five years. The regional offices have computers now, and by October, 1985, plans are for each supervisory field office to have at least one.

TRC has also made a commitment for every vocational rehabilitation caseload-carrying counselor to have a microcomputer by 1990

and will purchase them at the rate of approximately 100 units a year.

Wayne Sanders, program specialist and chairman of the Committee on Computer Assisted Rehabilitation Services, sees counselor use of

microcomputers as a way to provide "... more comprehensive service to our clients." In addition, says Sanders, it will reduce time spent on the time-consuming aspects of the rehabilitation process and will free the clerical staff to do an increased variety of essential tasks.

The field support specialist of Office Systems Support, Susan Hemphill, has been working with regional automation committees to establish needs and procedures for the automation of TRC offices around the state. These committees, one from each region, are comprised of representatives of each job type found in an ordinary field office. According to Hemphill, the committees have two purposes. First, they are trying to identify the problems employees have which would be remedied by some kind of automation. Secondly, they are looking for ways to integrate all forms of office equipment, procedures, and even changes in policy that might derive from increased automation in offices. "We're looking at systems flow and where automation would fit in," says Hemphill.

Jackson sees that the use of computers in the field, with the accompanying access to the mainframe, will enhance the feeling of unity throughout the commission by providing an increased flow of information to the staff around the state.

A challenge for TRC lies in "breaking down the fears and myths about computer usage," says Jackson. Many employees are uncomfortable around computers

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State Employees Subject to Financial Disclosure

Some state employees will experience a new constraint in executing their duties beginning September 1, 1985. At that time, all state employees responsible for entering into contracts and for approving expenditure of funds must have on file with their respective supervisors a personal financial disclosure statement.

TRC employees who are affected by Section 86, General Provisions of the General Appropriations Act must complete, notarize, and forward their financial disclosure statement to the Legal Services Division.

Commissioner Arrell is sensitive to the widespread concern among TRC employees about the provision. "We are working closely with the Attorney General's Office, the State Comptroller's Office, and the Legislative Budget Board to get as much relief as we can," he says.

As it stands now, however, any contractual agreement entered into by a TRC employee who has not filed a financial disclosure statement will be invalid. Says Arrell, "I will enforce it although I have philosophical differences with it."

Correction

In the last issue of "News & Views" we reported that Ilene Gray had collected a total of \$4,425 for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. The total actually came to \$6,425. We apologize for any inconvenience this report may have caused Ilene in explaining the missing \$2,000 to her friends and co-workers.

TRC to Name Outstanding Employees

In July, 1985 the Texas Rehabilitation Commission began a process to identify two outstanding employees in each of the six regions, the central office, and the Disability Determination Division.

Nominations for these awards are accepted from any TRC employee by a coordinator in each region, the central office and DDD who submits them to an anonymous selection committee chosen for each of the respective areas. Of the two chosen in each area, one will be from salary groups 2 - 11 and one from salary groups 12 - 20. By the end of August all 16 of these outstanding employees will have been chosen.

All selections are based on performance above regular job activities; positive relationships with coworkers, clients and the public; dependability, initiative, and flexibility; projecting a positive image of the agency; and participation in community programs which benefit disabled persons.

The final sixteen will then be eligible for the Top Employee of the Year Awards which will be announced this fall. Again, one employee from each salary group will be chosen for this top honor.

Carole Whitcraft, TRC's Assistant Deputy Commissioner for Research and Development, thinks the idea of an outstanding employee award might soon broaden to become a separate competition among all state employees. "I think we will soon see the legislature set up a statewide employee award system for all agencies," she says.

Later issues of "News & Views" will feature the winners of the Outstanding Employee Awards in the various regions.



Ribbon cutting for the Key Industries Workshop in Abilene. Left to right: Bruce Phipps, executive director, Goodwill Industries; Milton Lege, director, ERS; David Stubbeman, Mayor of Abilene; Commissioner Arrell, and Senator Grant Jones.

Grant Jones Cited for ERS Support in Abilene

State Senator Grant Jones received special recognition on June 10, 1985 from Commissioner Arrell for his continued support of the Extended Rehabilitation Services program in Abilene, Texas.

In a dedication ceremony at Goodwill Industry's Key City Industries Workshop, special commendations were also presented to Bruce Phipps, Goodwill Industries executive vice president, and Sterling Ellison, local ERS counselor/program manager for TRC.

The ERS program employs severely disabled people for both indoor and outdoor jobs. The local program has a number of contracts with private industry and local and state governments.

According to Milton Legé, director of ERS, Jones was in favor of ERS in Abilene and was instrumental in securing funds to help support the program.

Rehabilitation Funding Still Not Finalized

The House Appropriations Subcommittee for Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services met on July 10th to finalize the FY1986 funding bill. After a brief meeting, however, the subcommittee adjourned with no final recommendations for FY 1986 funding.

The question this subcommittee needed to resolve is whether rehabilitation programs in the nations would receive level funding (funding at the level appropriated for FY 1985) or full funding (the full amount authorized for FY 1986) for basic support (Sec. 110) funds. Full funding would bring the Texas Rehabilitation Commission and the Texas Commission for the Blind \$6 million more federal funds than level funding.

Later, in a rush to begin its August recess, the U. S. Congress a-

greed to a non-binding Fiscal Year 1986 First Congressional Budget Resolution which leaves enough leeway for rehabilitation programs to receive at least a cost-of-living increase (approximately 4.3%) in FY 1986, and, perhaps, the fully authorized amount.

Observers say that input from rehabilitation advocates will be the determining factor if the Congress is to appropriate full funding for Section 110 - basic state rehabilitation grants.

According to Commissioner Arrell, if TRC received level funding for FY 1986, the commission would be forced into a system of priority of services. In other words, TRC would serve the same disability groups it has in the past with, however, a diminished number of services.

CTD Fun-Run Scheduled for September

In a fund-raising effort to benefit the disabled community, the Coalition for Texans with Disabilities (CTD) will hold its annual Fun-Run on Sunday, September 15, 1985. You are invited to run, walk, roll, hop, or otherwise ambulate around a quarter mile track for any one hour between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. at St. Stephen's Episcopal School in Austin.

"T" shirts and ribbons will be provided by CTD to the participants and surprise gifts will be awarded to those who complete 15 and 20 laps within an hour.

The CTD Board of Directors, hoping to generate interest in

organizing Fun-Runs around the state, has voted to share the net profits of this year's Fun-Run on a 50% - 50% basis with local member organizations that sign up runners in their areas. This means that for every \$1.00 raised by a runner in your area, your organization will receive \$.50. Last year CTD raised about \$12,000, and their goal is to double that this year.

Two years ago Commissioner Arrell ran 27 laps in this fund-raiser. So, for those of you who consider yourselves to be athletically inclined, the gauntlet has been thrown down.

For more information about how

to participate in the Fun-Run, contact Linda Montani, c/o CTD, P.O. Box 4709, Austin, Texas 78765. Telephone: (512) 443-8252.

MILESTONES

This segment of News & Views honors TRC employees celebrating 10 years or more with the Commission as of the month previous to publication. Due to the length of the list, we are restricted to publishing these anniversaries in 5 year increments only. Here is a list of employees who have reached these "milestones."

JUNE

REGION I

15 years: Hugh Johnson

REGION II

10 years: Olga C. Moreno

REGION III

10 years: Jerry W. Gibson

15 years: Ruby R. Sievers

25 years: Benny L. Bowser

REGION V

10 years: Sue Allen

15 years: Armando Garcia

20 years: Marilyn R. Padgett

REGION VII

10 years: Roy V. Drake

15 years: James Lampkin

Ty Morris

20 years: Carolyn Hargrove

CENTRAL OFFICE

10 years: Jennifer L. Hall

15 years: Carolyn Napier

Rick Payson

Lee A. White

20 years: Ray Vaughn

DDD

15 years: Sandra McKinley

JULY

REGION II

15 years: John A. Baker

REGION III

10 years: Jackson King

REGION IV

10 years: Arlene P. Arauz

REGION V

15 years: George J. Andreatos

20 years: Jerry Crain

Neil E. Gilliam

CENTRAL OFFICE

10 years: Vernon H. H. Newman

15 years: Mona S. Raven

20 years: Dale Place

DDD

10 years: Dorothy K. Kopecky

LETTERS

Here is part of a letter received by Jerry Simmons, area manager in the Austin Field Office South, written by TRC client Patty Thomas:

"I would like to bring to your attention the exceptional dedication of one of your Texas Rehabilitation Commission counselors. To Virginia Bosman, no one is 'just another client.' She takes the time to really get to know and care about us as individuals. She believes in her work and she believes in us. I've talked to some of the other clients and we all feel like she should be commended on all the hard work she puts in to help us succeed."

Future Offices

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because they have had little or no experience with them. The commission, however, is committed to training its staff, where applicable, in the use of computers or any device necessary to make the employee's work more effective.

The use of microcomputers with their access to the mainframe is only one aspect of the coming automation of TRC offices. In the next issue of "News & Views" we will explore the potential for telecommunication and its impact on the commission.

The following is a portion of a letter received by Commissioner Arrell from the parents of Kathrine Albright, TRC client assigned to Diane Garcia, counselor in the Garland Field Office:

"I have nothing but positive things to say about Metrocrest and the work of Diane Garcia. They took an interest in Kate, guiding her through the proper channels — testing, training, etc., to where she is today. We have seen our taxes at work and are grateful to the people in charge of handling this service. May I commend the state of Texas and your employees for the great work accomplished through the Texas Rehabilitation Commission. Kate is able to be a part of our great society and by paying her taxes can be of help to others like herself."

The family of TRC client Chuck Gary wrote this letter to Polly Walton, senior counselor in the Beaumont Field Office:

"We just wanted to try to express to you our gratitude for sticking by us through thick and thin over these last few years. There have been some pretty rough places, but it's not been dull. We appreciate too the financial support from TRC. It's an extremely large amount of money, but what value can you place on being a whole person instead of part of a person."

Applause

James Jones, area manager at the Richmond Field Office, has been elected president of the Houston Area Rehabilitation Association.

The Texas Association of Vocational Adjustment Coordinators has presented **Allan Craig**, counselor in the Amarillo Field Office, an award for his outstanding contribution to the cooperative work-study program at Caprock High School.

These TRC employees received press coverage for the commission recently: **Patsy Ambrose**, counselor in the Houston Central Field Office; **Pat Romo**, counselor in the Lubbock Field Office; **Jo Anne Hull**,

counselor in the Corsicana Field Office; **Jake Reeves**, senior counselor at the Tyler Field Office; **Fred Matthews**, counselor at the Corpus Christi Field Office South; **Milton Lege**, program specialist at the Central Office; **Mario Martinez**, counselor in the San Angelo Field Office; **Sterling Ellison**, senior counselor at the Abilene Field Office; **Ken Bowen**, area manager at the Victoria Field Office; and **Bonnie Tyler**, counselor in the Dallas Rehabilitation Institute Field Office.

In fiscal year 1985, these TRC counselors received letters of commendation from Commissioner Arrell for the quality of their case-work: **Cliff Hughes**, Killeen Field Office; **Dan White**, Killeen Field Office; **Jo Anne Hull**, Corsicana Field Office; **Maria Trevino**, Houston East End Field Office; **J. C. Cardwell**, Corpus Christi Field Office West; **Pat Alba**, Corpus Christi Field Office South; **Gilbert Bermea**, Uvalde Field Office; **Tom Brock**, Gatesville Field Office; **Regina Hoffman**, Dallas-Oak Cliff Field Office; **Dixie Dillard**, Tyler Field Office; **William Brown, III**, Beaumont Field Office; **Elaine Demar**, Houston Field Office Central; **Bill Vardell**, Vernon Field Office; and **Luana Warden**, San Antonio Field Office North.

Transitions

William Brown, III, Beaumont Field Office, has been promoted to senior counselor.

Dave Ward, an eleven year employee with the Disability Determination Division, has been selected as the new Director of Operations Analysis.

Louise Wagner, former senior counselor in the Fort Worth Southeast Field Office, has been selected to become area manager in the Fort Worth West Field Office effective September 1, 1986.

Martha Sullivan, clerical supervisor who had been with the Disability Determination Division for eleven years, died June 28, 1985.

Dora G. Barrera, stenographer in the San Antonio Field Office South, retired June 30, 1985 after 20 years of TRC service.

Charles L. Vassallo, counselor in the University of Houston Field Office will retire effective September 30, 1985 after 22 years of service with TRC.

Bill Thompson, area manager in the Fort Worth West Field Office, will retire on September 1, 1985.

John R. Weir, executive director of the El Paso Opportunity Center for the Handicapped (EPOCH), passed away July 6, 1985.

News & Views

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