

trc today

An Employee Newsletter for Texas Rehabilitation Commission

Congressman Doggett Delivers

Recently, Congressman Lloyd Doggett was greeted with a surprise celebration at the Brow Heatly Public Hearing Room. Over 300 TRC employees and clients gathered to thank him for his unwavering support for the Vocational Rehabilitation Program in Congress last fall. A video replay of his speech in C-Span covered heated debate on the floor of the House to keep VR from being consolidated brought a thundering round of applause as everyone relived the experience of Sept. 1995.

During the celebration, Doggett received a TRC Board Proclamation from Vice-Chair Ray Wilkerson. "People in Austin really appreciated Doggett's willingness to listen to their concerns and actively support us in Congress," says Commissioner Arrell. "This is our way of thanking him for that."



Top Photo: Vice-Chair Ray Wilkerson (left) and Commissioner Arrell (right) personally acknowledging Congressman Doggett during the celebration. Bottom Photo: Doggett with consumers after the ceremony.

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Texas Rehabilitation
Commission
4900 N. Lamar Blvd.
Austin, Texas 78751-2399
Vol. 19 No. 3 March 1996

Black History Month Celebrated

African American Women – Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow” was the national theme for this year’s Multi-Agency Black History Celebration. The celebration was dedicated to the late Barbara Jordan who passed away in January.

Born in Houston, Jordan held public office from 1967 to 1979. She was regarded by many as the nation’s conscience during the Nixon Watergate hearings in which her impassioned defense of the Constitution and Bill of Rights set the tone for the hearings.

In 1976, Jordan made history

by being the first African American woman to give the keynote address at the National Democratic Convention in which she asked Americans to come together in a “great healing of the national heart and soul.”

In accordance with this dedication and theme, speeches were given by State Rep. Dawnna Dukes, keynote speaker, and Vicki Wright, executive director of Texas Juvenile Probation Commission.

A diverse and enthusiastic audience enjoyed additional entertainment including the heartfelt singing of the State Agency Mass Choir, and a poignant delivery of Maya Angelou’s, “And Still I Rise” performed by Julia Dobbins.

The varied program more than accomplished the objective of program facilitator, Tom Simpson, which was “to educate and entertain for the purpose of getting to know one another.”

Right-Sizing in the Brown- Heatly Building

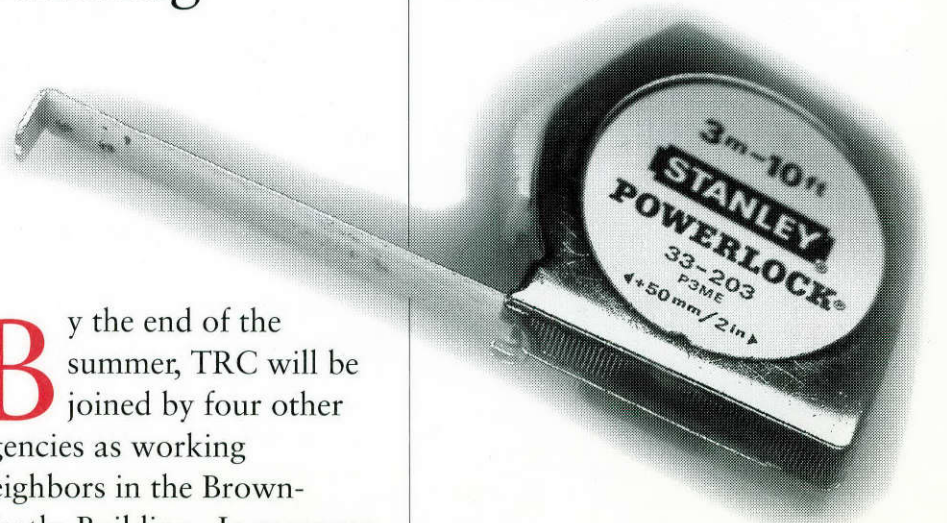
By the end of the summer, TRC will be joined by four other agencies as working neighbors in the Brown-Heatly Building. In response to a legislative mandate to limit employee workspace to 150 square feet, the General Services Commission is reconfiguring space assignments to accommodate 250 new people in the building.

“We will certainly respond to the legislative mandate,” says Commissioner Arrell, “but, we will maintain the building accessibility for people with disabilities that has brought national attention to the Brown-Heatly Building.”

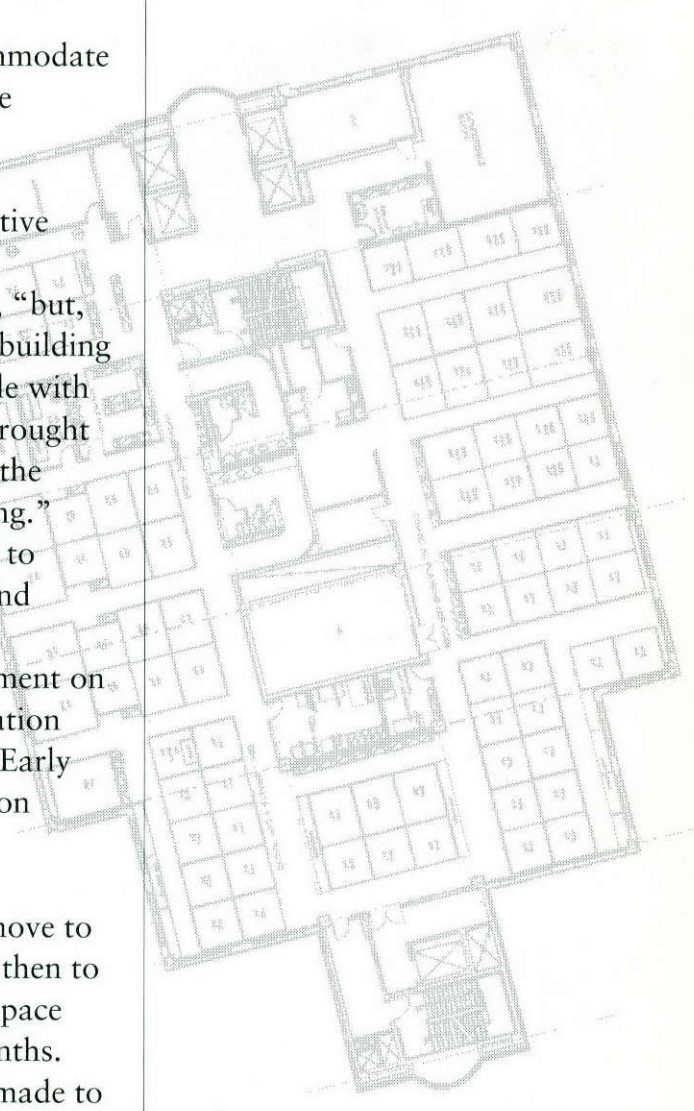
Agencies expected to move in are Health and Human Services Commission, Department on Aging, Juvenile Probation Commission and the Early Childhood Intervention Agency.

Most of the TRC employees will first move to temporary space and then to their final new workspace over the next 4-5 months. Every effort is being made to keep connectivity of each employee by phone and LAN/WAN so that

administrative support of field staff can continue. As the relocation within the building actually begins, field staff will be notified of any conditions which might effect the smooth operation of delivering services to clients.



Top Photo: Rep. Dawnna Dukes (center) with other attendees.
Bottom photo: The State Agency Mass Choir entertaining the crowd.



Reengineering - Show and Tell

Commissioner Arrell said recently that as reengineering progresses, it becomes part of our day-to-day operations. Currently, we are in the final stages of developing products for the automated rehabilitation and procurement system. This page is a status report and sneak peek of what you can expect in the not-so-distant future.

VR Process Screens

Here are two of the screens you'll see on your computer in the new automated system.

Disability ... can go to the list which gives categories, then subcategories. Once you choose, it will automatically give a disability code.

Program info ... launches into program specific questions for VR, ILS, CRS, ERS.

Financial information ... you capture the financial information and it will automatically calculate basic living requirements.

Application Statement ... client reads the application statement and can enter a PIN number.

The Profile

The Profile replaces the application and will be used for VR, ILS, CRS and ERS. It condenses all application information into one workable screen. Arrows are drop down boxes that offer choices. Once information is complete, the system automatically generates eligibility action.

“What we’ve done here is basically make the profile one page where you see all the major important items. From there, you have the option to see additional information. All you have to do is go to what you need to see and click on it. The profile is compact and is easy to use.”

— Shanaz Hemmati, programmer.

Due	Action Statement	Completed	Cancelled	Delegated To
02/14/1996	Initial Contact Information	02/14/1996	00/00/0000	
03/24/1996	Eligibility determination is due on 04/14/1996	00/00/0000	00/00/0000	

Actions lists

Each case has its own action list. Many items on the action list are generated automatically by the system based on the information entered by the user. Also, a feature allows counselors to look at actions from all cases that are date specific. Each day, counselors can click on a menu item and see which actions are due on that particular day and go to those cases that need work. And, users can enter any action of their own and give it a due date.

BSSU on target

The automated procurement system for client purchases is making a lot of progress. Databases will be ready with provider and specification information by August for testing. These databases will continue to be populated with information throughout the fall.

The first release of the new system will:

- have linking databases for specifications and providers. Field staff will also be able to see which providers have contracts with the agency.
- generate automated purchase orders.
- tie into Action Lists, which provide prompts for the purchase of planned services.

When buyers cannot locate a specification or provider, they will call the BSSU unit who will assist in adding the new information to the system. Field Staff will have only one point of contact when dealing with purchasing items, which will greatly simplify the current process.

Trial Runs

Starting late summer, two “trial runs” will be conducted by end-users to find and resolve any problems before implementation. Field staff will be testing how the products work in day-to-day operations and just as important, how the new process and automated system work together.

The first will be a “mock” field office in which 500 cases will be processed by counselors and RSTs in the new system. Two participants will be selected from each region and Bertha Hinojosa, director of Region II staff operations, will oversee the six-week testing. After that, a field office in Region III will have its run at the new system for one month.

During the fall, training will start and all field offices will have the new system for several months before implementation so that they can practice and get familiar with it.

Cut-over from the old to the new system is expected Jan. 1.

Innovative solutions

When Linda Grimsley came through TRC's door about four years ago, Joe Catenazzo, counselor in the Corpus Christi Field Office, thought her case could pose problems. It turned out that there was not only a solution for Linda, but she became the answer to a lot of Catenazzo's clients.

"I didn't know what to do with Linda's case at first. She had a bachelors degree and teaching certificate, but found that teaching interfered with her disability," says Catenazzo. "Sometimes when you have someone with a degree in a rural area it's even more difficult because they're overqualified. And Linda didn't want to commute 40 miles to Corpus Christi because she has a vision problem."

"When we put her through job preparation training in Corpus, the idea came up: Could Linda deliver these types of services? In the past, it has been hard to provide job readiness and preparation training in the large rural area. So it became a really good fit. At first, she provided these services through Goodwill and then became an independent contractor."

"Traveling 80 miles round trip to receive services was a problem for many clients. I know because I've been there," says Linda. "When I first see people, many are very close to hopeless. We see them make progress and there is something special about seeing that light come on in their eyes when they realize that they do have a chance at getting a job."

Linda and Joe meet every week to talk over client progress. They also work closely together in making sure that clients stay in the loop. "The most important thing for clients to know is that you have a team of people working for you," says Grimsley. "Many of our clients have been unsuccessful in jobs and, had Joe or I been there to help, the outcome might have been different."

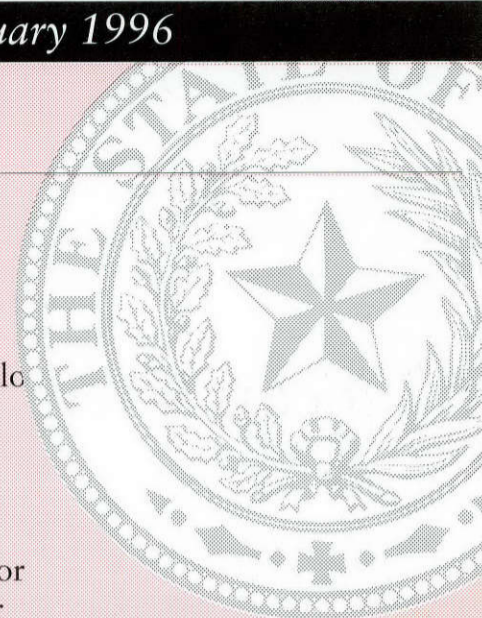


Linda Grimsley conducting and videotaping practice interviews with TRC clients during job readiness classes.

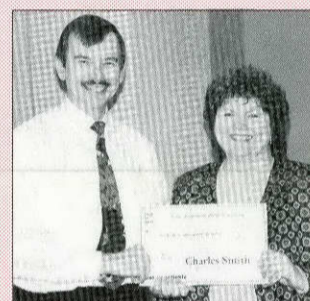
Across the State January 1996

Welcome Aboard!

Darla Smith, ad tech
 Kerry Conly, statistician
 Christina Ihrer, clerk
 Amy Rollins, journalist
 Christina Alvarez, counselor
 Amy Gilmore, RST
 Norma Uvalle, ad tech
 Donna Bell, RST
 Erma Adams, counselor
 Frances Bowling, counselor
 Stanley Collins, counselor
 Wendell Rowland, counselor
 Helen Wakefield, RST
 Cheryl Arneson, counselor
 Jacinta Mikell, counselor
 Darla Jasik, ad tech
 Wanda Kirklen, counselor
 Joy Ames, clerk



Kudos



Chuck Smith and Joanne Edge, his supervisor

Thanks to the State Employees Incentive Program, Chuck Smith of HRM made \$212 by submitting an innovative money-saving plan for TRC. His idea was simple yet effective: faxing job reports rather than mailing them.

Deaths

Dorothy McCarver, RST in the Dallas Southwest Field Office, was killed in an automobile accident on February 18, 1996. McCarver was employed by the Commission for nearly 30 years.

Boyd Zoeller, a DDS employee who retired in 1980 after working over 20 years with TRC, died in February after a long illness.

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TRC Today is published by the Texas Rehabilitation Commission for distribution to its employees and retirees throughout the state. We welcome submissions for publication, but reserve the right to edit or screen materials according to newsletter policy. Address submissions or inquires to Shayla Fleshman, Public Information Office, Texas Rehabilitation Commission, 4900 N. Lamar Blvd., Austin, Texas 78751-2399; or telephone (512) 483-4043.

Randy Jennings, Director of Public Information
Shayla Fleshman, Editor
Randy Phinney & Susan Antoniewicz, Design

A first time event ... pass it on

**HELPING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
UNDERSTAND HEALTH COVERAGES
AND ALTERNATIVES**

*April 18, 1996
Austin*

9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Burnt Orange Room - Frank Erwin Center, 1701 Red River St.

For more information, call (512) 322-4310

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