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TRC TODAY
a newsletter for
employees of the
Texas Rehabilitation
Commission

Vol. 12 No. 7
July 1990

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Nick Perez, job coach for the Red Lobster project in McAllen, watches as Ruth Cantu "clocks in" for work, one of the first tasks she learned for the job.

Red Lobster clamps down on unemployment

Each day at 9 a.m., Ruth Cantu, 26, arrives at the Red Lobster restaurant in McAllen--ready for work.

She codes in her arrival on a computer in the "alley" next to the kitchen. Then, she joins six other TRC and Tropical Texas MHMR Center workers in the back dining room to wrap silverware, one of several tasks they do for John Yochim, Red Lobster manager.

Once the silverware is wrapped, Cantu returns to the food preparation "alley" where she arranges and decorates food on plates to be served.

"They are training to do a lot of the server work," says Yochim. "The servers love them," he grins.

She and the other clients learned these skills from Nick Perez, a TRC-sponsored job coach who provides continuing support to the clients and to the Red Lobster staff.

Only a few months ago, Cantu and the rest of the clients at Red Lobster, had workshop assembly jobs at the Tropical Texas Center in Edinburg, earning non-competitive wages.

Now they're making competitive salaries and working alongside Yochim's other non-disabled employees.

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Bulletin Board

The Do-able Renewable Home is chock-full of ideas that are economical and practical for people wanting to re-do their home to remove barriers for anyone with a disability. Better yet, its 36 pages of clear explanations, illustrations and lists of suppliers are free! Find out about an array of household devices--such as doorknobs, roll-in showers, treads and faucets--that are made for ease in use. Request your copy today from Consumer Affairs Program Department, Association of Retired Persons, 1909 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20049.



The Texas Attorney General's Office Child Support Enforcement Program recently began a deaf outreach program designed to improve communications and services to hearing-impaired clients. The goal is to help deaf and hearing impaired parents receive the child support owed them. For brochures explaining the program, call (512) 477-1209 (TDD) or (512) 463-2181 ext. 4075 (Voice).



A disability statistics program is available to serve your needs for information. Funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, the project develops and disseminates statistical information on disability in the United States. When you call or write the project, a specialist will

- help you clarify and focus your question
- search a statistics database for data
- make a referral if your information is not available
- answer brief questions over the telephone
- answer questions by mail on request.

Contact Disability Statistics Program Information Service, InfoUse, 1995 University Avenue, Suite 215, Berkeley, Calif. 94704, or call (415) 644-9904.



Human Resource Development is coordinating a supported employment conference August 1-3 at the Brown-Healy Building (TRC Central Office) in Austin. The conference will address issues such as funding, eligibility, work incentives and employer perspectives,

among others. Final confirmation date for the training activity is July 6. For more information, contact Barbara Jaeger at (512) 483-4207.



Now hear this . . .

Congress is struggling with passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A conference committee attending to last minute amendments and legislative tactics to stall passage by opponents is expected to use a recess to cool tempers. Senator Jesse Helms has threatened to "hold ADA hostage" to consideration of the Chapman amendment which prohibits workers with AIDS from handling food. Cooler heads are expected to wrap up negotiations for a final vote and President Bush's signature.

Meanwhile, in anticipation of passage of ADA, national media publications are carrying editorial and information articles on the significance of the new law on people with disabilities and the business community. TRC is planning, with key members of the Texas Rehabilitation Association, to reach out to vendors, employers, service providers, and employees with a "catch the spirit" message to smooth the way for acceptance of ADA.

If you have returned your renewal,
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Clamp on children's disability cases tightens

***Zebley vs. Sullivan* backlogs 1,900 claims in Texas**

The recent U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Zebley vs. Sullivan* (see April "TRC Today"), is causing a "log jam" of children's disability claims in Disability Determination Services.

The court ruled that regulations used to determine children's disability claims for Supplemental Security Income are not valid. As a result, thousands of children's disability claim "denials" remain frozen awaiting review under new standards.

According to Bruce Rollman, director of administration and policy in DDS, children with disabilities were previously eligible for SSI benefits under Social Security Act Title XVI regulations if:

- the family's income was sufficiently low, and
- the severity of the impairment met or equalled medical criteria "listed" by SSA

"The court said 'you can't deny them benefits simply for not meeting the medical listings; you have to consider the functional impact of the impairment,'" says Rollman.

In children's disability cases, considering how a disability restricts age-appropriate activities of daily living will provide more information about the extent of the impairment.

With the help of state DDSs, SSA is developing new regulations which will identify and consider age-appropriate activity for children with disabilities. The SSA target date to issue final new regulations to comply with the court decision is September 1.

DDS received interim instructions on evaluating backlogged children's disability claims in mid-June. At that time, over 1,900 claims had been stored in Texas alone.

Help for Summer Colds

What we commonly think of as summer colds are often not colds at all but allergies. There are some things you can do, though, to relieve the discomfort of both summer colds or allergic rhinitis.

- Keep windows and doors closed during late summer and early fall, when ragweed is pollinating.
- Change air filters monthly in heating and air conditioning systems, or install an air purifier.
- Sleep with the head of your bed tilted upward.
- Rid your home of indoor plants, animals and mildew.
- Use antihistamines and decongestants as necessary and as tolerated.

Also, DDS organized five "Zebley Teams" to prepare for the impact of the court decision in key areas.

The Zebley Teams are made up of programs operations staff members and administrative management services staff members who will address questions of policy and training as well as help develop instructions to determine cases under the *Zebley* decision.

An important question remains. How far back do state DDSs go in reviewing childhood disability cases? SSA is requesting that the court decision be retroactive a maximum of 10 years. But, indications are that case reviews may be required for children's disability claims dating back to 1974.

In Texas, the *Zebley* ruling could mean:

- an additional 30,000 children's claims added to the workload
- 135 more staff members to process these claims
- a cost of \$8.7 million to comply with the decision

These estimates will go much higher if children's cases questioned under *Zebley* go back to 1974.

Zebley could mean a cost of \$8.7 million in Texas

Awards

TRC Service

JUNE 1990

Region II

15 years:

Olga C. Moreno

Region III

10 years:

Shauna K. Burns
Susan A. Pargin
Edith Sirles

15 years:

Jerry W. Gibson

30 years:

Benny Lee Bowser

Region IV

10 years:

Paulette Davis

Region V

15 years:

Mario Flores

20 years:

Armando Garcia

25 years:

Marilyn Padgett

Region VI

10 years:

Betty Miller

20 years:

Tyrone Morris
James L. Lampkin

25 years:

Carolyn Tillery

DDS

10 years:

Eunice Koontz
Robert Edwards
Rolando Garza
Lorie Bagwell
Rebecca McNicol
Diana Arismendez
David E. Sandefur
Bruce E. Scarborough
Virginia Stumph

Central Office

10 years:

Robert Strickland
Robert Stanislawski

15 years:

Jennifer Hall

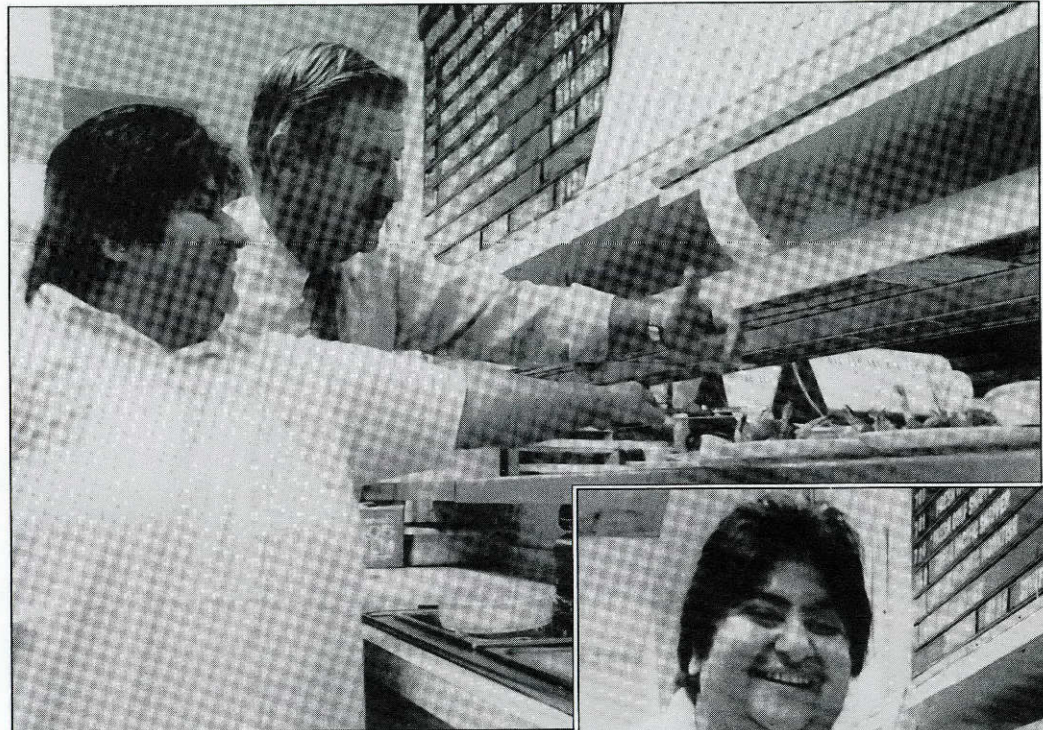
20 years:

Richard Payson
Carolyn L. Napier
Lee White

25 years:

Ray Vaughn

Cantu *continued from page 1*



John Yochim, manager of the McAllen Red Lobster, shows Ruth Cantu some of the finer points of garnishing a plate for serving.

Cantu, who has mild mental retardation, loves her job at the restaurant. She likes working for John and likes making new friends. But for her, it's more than a job; it represents a "hand up" from the poverty and neglect of her childhood and early adulthood.

As a child, Cantu was passed from relative to relative. At 13, she was forced to sleep in an abandoned car for a while. Finally, she was placed in a foster home. Later, at age 22, she managed to finish high school.

In the past year, Cantu got married, got the job at Red Lobster and bought her own house in Weslaco.

"I've been doing a lot better with help," she says.

"The guests think it's great these folks are working here," says Yochim. "It's great for the community and for the company."



The program began last September when Mario Flores, counselor in the Edinburg Field Office, approached Yochim about beginning a special effort at Red Lobster to hire people with disabilities. Yochim liked the idea.

Seeing what good workers Cantu and the other clients are, he has become a strong supporter of the project. He even talks to other local restaurants about hiring people with disabilities.

Continued on page 9

Survey of Texas employers reveals reasons for hiring, firing

(Reprinted from Texas Business Today, a publication of the Texas Employment Commission)

The Advisory Council for Technical-Vocational Education in Texas completed an interesting survey of over 1,000 Texas employers.

Respondents rated the importance of education, training, attitudes, grooming, etc., to the acceptance or rejection of job applicants. Here is a sample of the results:

The five leading reasons employers gave for rejecting job applicants after the submission of an application form are, in order:

1. Past history of job-hopping
2. Lack of job-related skills/education
3. Incomplete and/or poorly filled out job application form
4. Little or no work experience
5. Health record

The five leading reasons employers gave for rejecting job applicants after the initial job interview are, in order:

1. Little interest or poor reasons for wanting job
2. Inability of applicant to communicate during job interview
3. Immaturity (other than chronological age)
4. Personal appearance
5. Training/experience background just not sufficient for firm's needs

Employers cited the five primary causes of employee termination as being, in order:

1. Absenteeism
2. Not qualified to perform tasks
3. Continuously makes costly mistakes
4. Does not follow instructions
5. Lacks interest in job

Employers also registered concern that prospective employees possess basic and occupational skills, while fully 91 percent said they expect to have to retrain employees during their employment. Copies of the survey are available from the Advisory Council, P.O. Box 1886, Austin, Texas 78767.

Legislative update

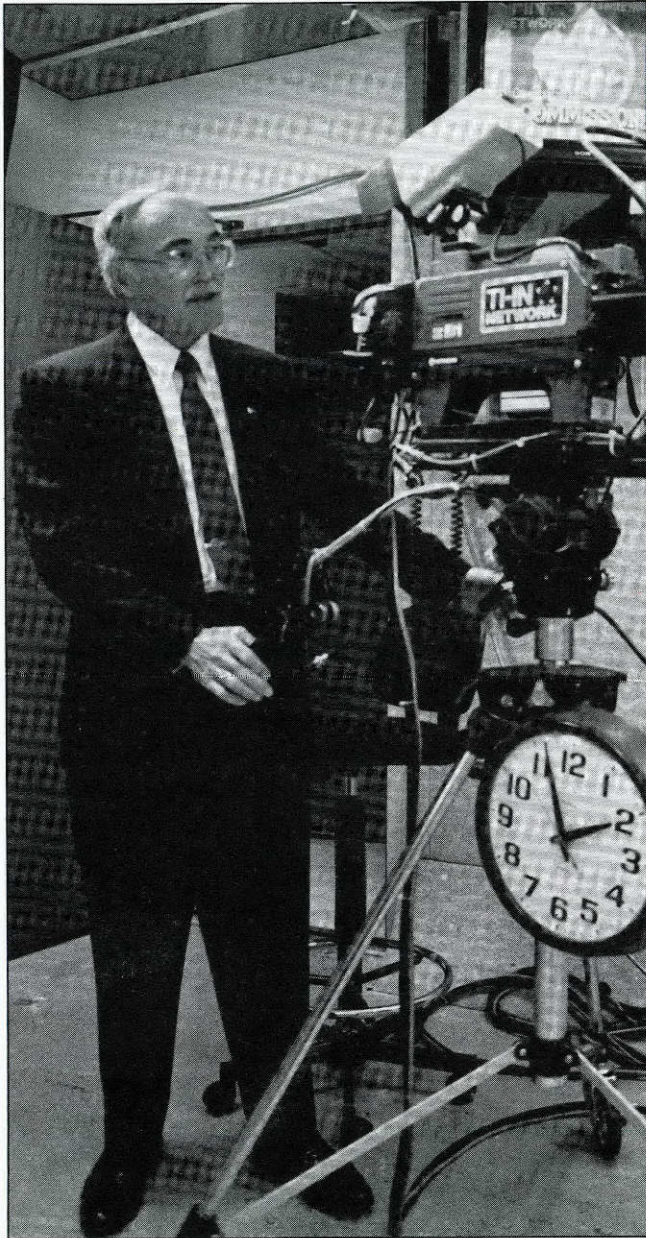
Hearings are beginning in Congress on appropriations for the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The primary emphasis for disability advocates will be to ask Congress to appropriate monies at the already authorized spending levels.

Professionals, advocates, service providers and others concerned with strengthening rehabilitation programs have formed the National Rehabilitation Coalition to carry the message to Congress.

People with disabilities comprise a significant portion of our nation's population, an estimated 36 million. This population continues to grow -- through accidents, injuries, illnesses and birth defects -- at an estimated rate of 500,000 annually. A conservative estimate of 10,000 Texans join the ranks of people with disabilities each year.

The Rehabilitation Act is one of the most complete and well-balanced pieces of legislation in the field of human services. Few, if any, programs funded by the federal government consistently return so many benefits, both financially and personally, to all segments of our society. Unfortunately, available funding falls far short of the demonstrated rehabilitation needs of eligible individuals with disabilities.

*10,000
Texans
join the
ranks of
people
with
disabilities
each year*



Commissioner Arrell checks the camera angle before going on the air in TRC's first experiment with "live" television May 17 at TI-IN Network studios in San Antonio.

TRC experiments with live broadcast

Commission upper management spoke directly to field staff around the state via "live" television broadcast May 17--the first ever at TRC.

The broadcast originated from the TI-IN (pronounced "tie-in") Network studios in San Antonio. A satellite-based education network, TI-IN "uplinks" academic programs to school districts nationwide.

A GTE Spacenet II satellite relays the signals to 76 receiver sites in Texas, mostly education services centers.

The broadcast, which was provided free, on an experimental basis, drew 497 employee/viewers at 20 locations statewide.

Commission employees saw Commissioner Arrell, Executive Deputy Commissioner Jackson, Deputy Commissioner Fenoglio and Controller Charles Harrison discuss issues currently affecting the agency, its employees and its clients.

Part of the broadcast was like a "Conversation with the Commissioner" distributed from time to time on videotape to the field staff.

But it was more.

This time it was "live," with Kaye Beneke, assistant deputy commissioner for consumer affairs, acting as moderator for the two-hour experimental program.

The broadcast also included phone-in question segments which allowed field staff to get responses on the air. But, there were fewer questions than anticipated.

"People seemed hesitant to call in," says Commissioner Arrell. "Everyone was waiting to see what would happen, whether they would get in trouble for asking questions."

"It was a good first try," he says. "We learned some things."

He stresses that the program was not meant to be a "slick" television production. It was, instead, an experiment using live television as a way to communicate with employees in the field.

In fact, Commissioner Arrell sees more long-term potential for this medium in the area of staff development and training.

John Morgan, director of security and communications, coordinated this experimental broadcast with TI-IN.

He and other TRC officials are looking at broadcast evaluation forms filled out by employees after the program. They want to determine whether such programming would be an effective way to provide training and communicate with field staff.



Region I

Ronald Howell was recently selected to be a counselor in the Pampa Field Office.

Region II

Juanita F. Jacobsen, rehabilitation services technician in the Wichita Falls Field Office, retired May 31 after 20 years of service with the Commission.

The Academy of Family Physicians will hold its 1990 annual assembly August 23-24 at the Fort Worth Tarrant County Convention Center. DDS and vocational rehabilitation staff members will host a TRC exhibit booth for both days of the assembly which is expected to draw over 500 participants.

John Cosgrove, counselor in the Fort Worth Field Office Southeast, recently joined the Fort Worth South Field Office as case manager of the Return to Work Program. Cosgrove brings 18 years of TRC experience to his new position.

Region III

Steve Schoen, counselor in the Bryan Field Office, was recently chosen to fill the new transitional counselor position in the Austin Regional Office, one of only nine such positions in the state. Schoen began his duties May 9.

Jessie Wilborn, medical services coordinator in the Austin Regional Office, is leaving her post to become a disability examiner for DDS.

Linda Louckes, former clerical supervisor in the East Austin Field Office, was recently selected as the new medical services coordinator in the Austin Regional Office.

The Commission has a new field office on the campus of Alvin High School in Alvin Texas. Linda Shaw, counselor, and Fran Wester, rehabilitation service technician, will provide services to clients in the north Brazoria County area, including Alvin, Pearland and Friendswood. The Alvin Field Office is located at the Alvin High School, 802 South Johnson, Building F, Alvin, Texas 77511. Telephone: (512) 585-3960.

Region IV

The Rosenberg Field Office recently welcomed Mike Harcher to its job readiness trainer/GATB evaluator position. Harcher will work with TRC clients in Fort Bend, Austin and Colorado Counties as well as with clients in southwest Houston.

Jim Newman was recently selected to fill the independent living services counselor position in the Houston Central Field Office. Newman, a captain in the Army Reserve, began his duties June 21.

Yeura Smith, area manager in the Houston North Field Office, will retire July 31 after 27 years with the Commission. Smith says that even in retirement, he will look for other opportunities to serve people with disabilities. Plans are underway for his retirement celebration July 30.

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Editor's Note: If you have items of interest in the various TRC regions (including DDS and Central Office), such as local awards, press coverage, conferences, meetings or other TRC related activities which could appear in Regional Notes, please submit them for consideration to "TRC Today" c/o the Public Information Office.

We're Always in Hot Water

Americans seem to be in the midst of a love affair with hot water. How many gallons of hot water do you think a family of four uses each month? Let's see; if you have a 60-gallon tank that you empty once a day, that's about 1,800 gallons a month.

But that's not even close, so try again. A typical family of four uses about 5,000 gallons of HOT water a month.

Where does it go? Well, it takes 25 gallons for each load of laundry; 20 gallons per tub bath; 5 gallons per shower (unless you have teenagers); 6 to 8 gallons to run the dishwasher; 5 gallons to prepare foods. Add in hand washing, house cleaning, car washing, pet bathing, and you keep your hot water heater plenty busy!

*I have
the utmost
respect
for TRC
employees*

Wilkerson enjoys a "working" Board

Ray Wilkerson, came to Austin from Breckenridge to attend the University of Texas and never left.

In 1971, he graduated with a business degree and soon after formed Ray Wilkerson Companies, Inc., a management development investment company with properties all over the state.

As vice-chairman of the TRC Board, Wilkerson brings over 15 years of business perspective to decisions affecting the agency and its clients.

Wilkerson's interest in human service agencies started in college. He served as an aide to a few Texas legislators and as a clerk on committees considering human service legislation.

"I got to see first hand how the system worked," he says. "With that experience and a business approach, I thought I could add something to the TRC Board."

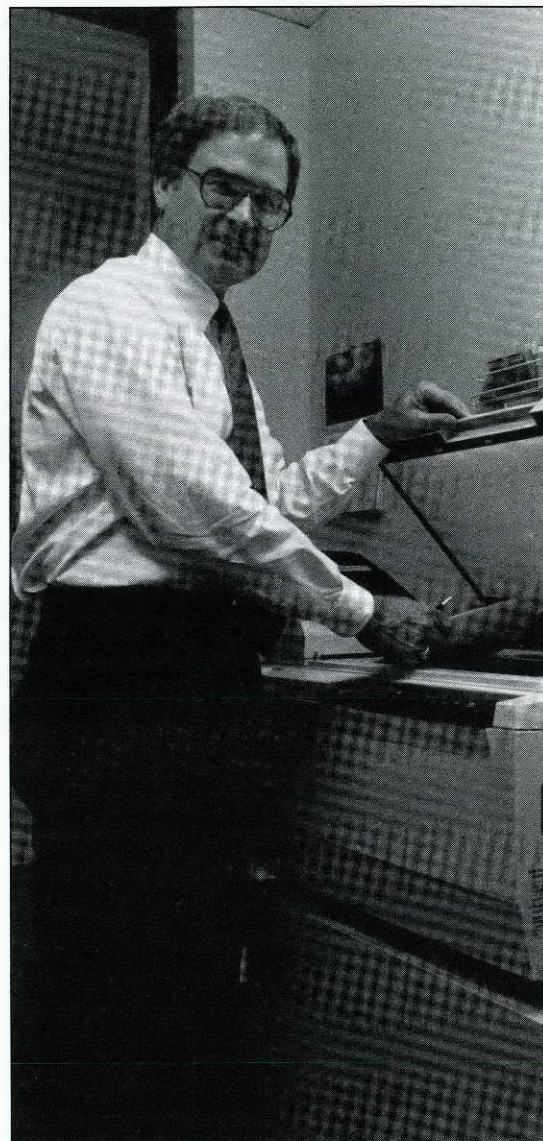
In his one and one-half years on the Board, Wilkerson has developed a healthy appreciation for Commissioner Arrell, the TRC staff and his co-board members.

"I'm extremely pleased with the wealth of backgrounds on the Board, from business to rehabilitation to disability advocacy."

He believes that diversity of backgrounds translates into a diversity of opinions. But Wilkerson sees this as a "plus."

"It's a working Board," says Wilkerson. "We have differences of opinion but we approach them in an analytic, constructive fashion and turn them into agreements."

For a while, after graduating from college, Wilkerson served as head accountant for the Texas Youth Council.



After working hard all week, Ray Wilkerson looks forward to the weekends with his wife and two children on his working ranch just outside Lampasas.

"I know what it's like to work for the state. I have the utmost respect for TRC employees. I appreciate what it takes to carry out the agency mission--helping people with disabilities reach their highest potential for independence and productivity," says Wilkerson. "I'm inter-

Continued on page 10

Commissioner's Message Box

Q Why were the field and regional support staff not allowed to attend the Commissioner's talk on Thursday, May 17? We were told that the support staff was not included in the talk. I believe the support staff is just as important or even more important than other staff in TRC and should be shown the same respect as anyone else. Why aren't support staff considered "TRC partners?"

A I regret your understanding that field and regional staff were not involved in the telecast. Although attendance at the broadcast was not mandatory (Commission business needed to continue), it was not my intention that anyone be excluded from seeing the broadcast. A memo was sent to "All TRC Partnership" April 26 inviting the participation of all TRC employees in either the "live" telecast or in viewing the videotape to be released later. Of the 497 total viewers located at 23 sites across the state, 256 were regional and field office personnel. Many of them were rehabilitation services technicians. I would welcome your additional comments after you have had a chance to see the videotape.

Cantu *continued from page 4*

In fact, Yochim is following the corporation's national push to hire disabled workers. "I think it says Red Lobster is concerned," he says. "We're very family oriented, and it ties in closely."

Flores believes Yochim's personal dedication is one key to the project's success. He quickly adds that success also hinges on the close cooperation among several local agencies providing support to Yochim and the disabled workers.

The Tropical Texas Center offers transportation and case management services.

The Hidalgo County Department of Community Affairs coordinates local Job Partnership Training Act funds and agreed to offer on-the-job training monies for part-time employees in this instance.

TRC offers counseling and placement services as well as a job coach assigned exclusively to the Red Lobster project.

Yochim has already recommended that the Brownsville Red Lobster adopt a similar project to hire people with disabilities.

Whether that works or not, Yochim is making plans to promote disabled workers on his staff into other positions.

Success depends on close cooperation among agencies



Letters



Here is an appreciative letter from a claimant who received excellent service from Dennis Awbrey, disability examiner in CDR Unit 40.

"I want to compliment the courtesy, respect and helpfulness of Dennis Awbrey. It's not often people have a chance to give positive input in response to feeling "humanized." He has explained with a caring and yet professional attitude what is needed for me to assist the process. It's people like Mr. Awbrey that create an atmosphere of quality tax investment rather than useless squandering. Thank you; such members representing a knowledgeable and trained staff are rare."



Here is a portion of a letter written to Ty Morris, area manager in the Athens Field Office, from the mother of a client who received quality services from Lan Rainey, counselor in the Commerce Field Office:

"In August, 1989, my family relocated to Commerce. I contacted Lan Rainey to inquire about TRC programs for my son. He was kind enough not only to respond to my inquiries, but to also give me an appointment to come in to his office for an informal visit. Since that first visit, Mr. Rainey's interest in my son has been demonstrated consistently by his faithful attendance at ARD meetings, IDT staffings and Transition meetings. Additionally, he has responded in an efficient manner to all my other requests. Mr. Rainey is sympathetic to the needs of people with disabilities in this community. He is committed to meeting those needs. I consider myself fortunate to be associated with a TRC counselor who is, by my definition, qualified and dedicated. He deserves much more than my gratitude."



Following is a letter of "thanks" to Rhonda Brent, counselor in the Houston East Field Office, written by one of her clients:

"Thank you for all your help during the past year. Without your understanding of my financial needs, I would not have been able to complete school. You provided the means for services that helped ease my mind. If you only knew how I dreaded asking for help, and how relieved I was when you 'came through' for me each time. Once again, thank you for everything. I appreciate your understanding, and I appreciate each and every service you made available to me during the past year."



Wilkerson *continued from page 8*

ested in the opportunities we can provide for them."

"I also have a lot of respect for TRC clients, They are people who want to work," he says.

Wilkerson is active in several organizations. He sits on the Citizens Oversight Committee for the new convention center project in Austin. Much of his interest in the committee focuses on making the center accessible to people with disabilities.

Wilkerson and the other TRC Board members are concentrating on the next session of the Legislature which begins in January 1991.

"It will be a monumental problem to get a fair share of the pie," he says. "But, with the Commissioner's leadership, we can get across the message about our programs."

"We can prove a return on investment from an agency run on a business basis," says Wilkerson. "It's an easy concept to understand, but it's sometimes hard to get across."



Continued from page 7

Region V

Carmen Cortez is the new rehabilitation services technician working with Marisela Garcia, counselor in the Brownsville Field Office. She has been assigned to an ERS caseload.

Olaya Solis was selected as the rehabilitation services technician to work with Mario Flores, counselor in the Edinburg Field Office.

Minnie Contreras was assigned to the Harlingen Field Office as a counselor on a general caseload.

Gricelda Casiano recently joined the Laredo Field Office as rehabilitation service technician working with ERS Program Manager Armando Garcia.

The McAllen Field Office has three new counselors. Englantina Casares joins the office as a counselor with several years experience in social service agencies. Irene Neve worked for nine years with the Department of Human Services in McAllen and Dallas. Mary Correa, former counselor in the Harlingen Field Office, became the new transition counselor at the McAllen Office.

Last month we mistakenly entered a note about Joe Rodriguez, counselor in the Eagle Pass Field Office, under Region I. It should have appeared under "Notes" for Region V. Sorry for the inconvenience.

DDS

Albert Bork, translation service supervisor in DDS, coordinated a panel discussion at Texas Fiesta Educativa on the University of Texas campus June 2. Fiesta Educativa is a bilingual conference addressing the special needs of Hispanic persons with disabilities. Primarily for parents and professionals in the field of disability, the event aims to provide Spanish speaking parents with as much information on services as possible in the Spanish language. Bork's panel discussed the social security dis-

ability determination process. Disability examiners appearing with him were Hilda Duncan, Initial Unit 01; Molly Lozano, CDR Unit 40; Leonor Hernandez, Initial Unit 08; and Mary Lou Sanchez, Initial Unit 02.

The Texas Association of Disability Examiners walked away with several honors at the regional (Southwest Association of Disability Examiners) conference April 25-27 in Little Rock. The Texas chapter grabbed the Chapter of the Year Award as well as the Membership Award for the biggest membership increase. Gail Karwoski, TADE vice-president, received the Healthcare Rehabilitation Service Award and Glenda Pack, TADE/TRA liaison, received the SWADE Service Award.

Central Office

The TRC Library has a new librarian. Terry Foster was recently selected to fill the position left by Laura Haneman. Foster, who has extensive experience in several public and private libraries, has managed information research for private corporations and research firms.

Roxanne Rios, unit systems support specialist in the South Austin Field Office, recently joined the assistant controller's office as administrative secretary. Rios has over 12 years experience with the Commission.

Patti Jo Morrow was selected to fill the administrative technician position in the Controller's Office. She is a 16 year veteran of the Commission with experience in DDS and the Central Office.

Randy Phinney has come on board as the new graphic arts technical leader in Media Services. He will be managing the workload of the graphic arts unit which designs most TRC publications.

Jim Curd, former media director, assumes the role of electronic arts technical leader. As such, he will concentrate on expanding TRC's electronic capabilities in video and audio productions.



"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. Submissions or inquiries may be addressed to Vernon Dement, Public Information Office, Texas Rehabilitation Commission, 4900 N. Lamar Blvd., Austin, Texas 78751-2316; or telephone (512) 483-4422.

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Randy Jennings Director
Kaye Beneke ...Assistant Deputy
Commissioner

State recognizes employee contributions

Several thousand people attended the second annual State Employee Recognition Day on May 18. The occasion was punctuated with a rousing celebration in the Rotunda of the state Capitol building with cloggers (pioneer dancing) and bagpipers providing the entertainment. Dr. Robert Bernstein, commissioner of the Department of Health, presided over a program with this year's theme: "Giving on and off the job." Here, Rep. Bob Richardson, author of the state employee incentive legislation, announces the winner of the incentive award.



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