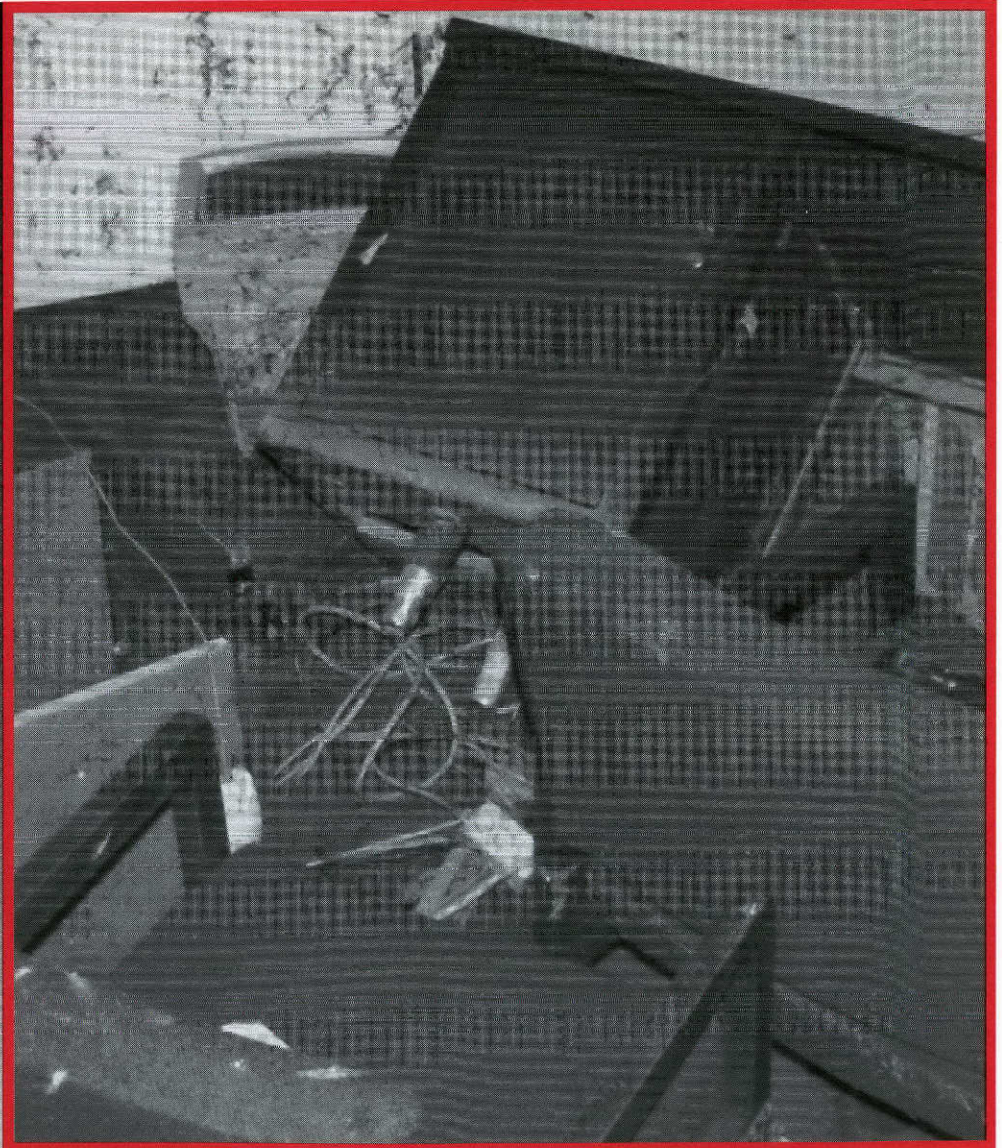


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trc today

An Employee Newsletter for Texas Rehabilitation Commission

Tropical Storm Charley takes its toll on TRC



"We train for this. We practice it. And if you train well, when you have a problem, you pretty well know what your folks are going to do."

CHARLEY storms Del Rio office

When sweeping floodwaters pounded South Texas killing at least 19 people, the property damage toll was over \$34.5 million, and TRC did not escape the disaster of Tropical Storm Charley unscathed.

TRC Counselor Vivian Sanchez couldn't believe her eyes when she walked into the Del Rio Field Office on the morning of Aug. 24. The water was about four feet deep, furniture was turned around and upside down, and half of the files were under water. "It was devastating," said Sanchez. "It was hard to get the door open because the mud and water was so high. We didn't have telephone service, so I went next door to DHS and called my supervisor, Armando Garcia, in Laredo."

The telephone call to Garcia immediately started the ball rolling to mobilize the TRC Disaster Emergency and Recovery (D.E.A.R.) team. The TRC risk-management plan requires all regions to keep an updated continuity plan that will initiate the recovery process of the affected office.

"We were prepared by having our disaster recovery plan up to date," says Garcia. "We immediately notified the regional office and John Morgan, the D.E.A.R. administrator in Central Office. From that point forward, the communication went fast and was well orchestrated. Mr. Morgan did a tremendous job of coordinating everything. I was amazed how everyone worked together to get our folks back into office space and functional again."

John Morgan arranged a conference call with regional and central office staff, and management decided that this was an emergency and recovery project and set the recovery wheels into motion. At the same time hundreds of rescue workers poured into Del Rio, the D.E.A.R.



Photo: RST Jo Elda Morales shows off her new workstation after restoration of the Del Rio office.

team also went into action.

The office was destroyed and everything in it had to be trashed. Garcia and Adrian Cervantez, staff services officer in the regional office, met with DHS counterparts and arranged for temporary accessible workspace in an adjacent office. Within hours, central office and regional staff headed to Del Rio to replace computer workstations and servers and reconnect Del Rio to the network system in the DHS office.

Morgan credits Garcia (the site recovery manager) and his administrative technician, Maria Piton who stayed on top of what was going on in Del Rio.

"The team components in the region and in central office operate with such a high degree of precision that my job of coordination is very easy," stated Morgan. "All I have to do is know what order things should go in and present that to the experts and everything else falls into place. We train for this. We practice it. And if you train well, when you have a problem you pretty well know what your folks are going to do."

Once temporary work quarters were established, the D.E.A.R. team went into another stage of recovery – clean up and office renovation. Waterlogged

and contaminated case files were examined, inventoried and sent off to be restored. The office was completely renovated from flooring to dry walls and electrical lines. After structural repairs were made, the D.E.A.R.'s automated services, facilities management, and operations support teams and vendors refurbished, recabled, replaced server and workstations and the telephone system. Finally, on Oct. 7, TRC's Del Rio employees, VRC Sanchez and RST Jo Elda

Morales, moved back into the newly renovated Del Rio field office.

It has been a very tough experience," said Sanchez. "But, the good thing is that so many people were here to help. It brought us close together with everyone. All these folks know their business and did what they needed to do to take care of us. What we have now is even better than our office before the flood. Everyone worked together quickly to make sure we could get back to our business which is to serve our customers – our clients."

In addition to the property damage at TRC, RST Jo Elda Morales had eight feet of water in her house and lost her home and vehicle to the storm. A fund was set up to help the Morales family and contributions have come in from TRC employees all over the state.

Leticia Hernandez, RST in the Eagle Pass office, lives in Del Rio also got water in her home.

Wilkerson receives Commissioner's Medallion

Photo: TRC Board member, Ray Wilkerson (center), is the new recipient of the Commissioner's Medallion. Commissioner Arrell (right) presented it to him at the TRC Board meeting on Sept. 24.

"Wilkerson is an excellent businessman and brings a good perspective to the Commission," said Arrell. "He always keeps the needs of people with disabilities as a priority." Jerry Kane (left), board chairman, also presented Wilkerson with a special recognition award for his 10th year anniversary of service to the TRC Board.

Wilkerson is president of Ray Wilkerson Companies, Inc., in Austin which is a development company specializing in real estate income properties.



Commissioner and Board Comment on Sunset

“On Sept. 13, 1998, TRC testified before the Sunset Advisory Commission as part of the Sunset process. As you may be aware, after a specific number of years have passed, most state agencies are reviewed by the Sunset Advisory Commission to see if a need still exists for the agency’s services. The Texas Rehabilitation Commission and most health and human services agencies are now being reviewed. The Sunset process provides for the periodic review of the efficiency and effectiveness of state agency operations and policies. In addition, the Sunset Advisory Commission staff also makes recommendations on how to improve service delivery at state agencies.

At this meeting, we were able to elaborate on TRC’s mission by highlighting information from the Department of Education and other published reports. The meeting was productive and there were many good points raised by the legislative members, consumers, and Sunset staff.

In the next few months, the Sunset Advisory Commission recommendations will finalize their recommendations. The Sunset process will conclude after final actions on the recommendations occur during the next legislative session which begins in January.”

AdminSys Laboring to Deliver

Statewide, staff is working harder and smarter to get out the new procurement and payment workflow system. They’re coding, testing, revising, training, and writing how-to’s. They’ve spent months on a shifting sea of deadlines, trusting they wouldn’t be swallowed up. Now, driven by a firm finish date, they’ve put all sails full to the wind.

On Dec. 21, the mainframe is going away and AdminSys makes her debut. She seems a little nervous primping in the wings. But there’s definite excitement about what’s to come.

In look and feel, the new program will be just like RehabSys — English instead of codes, pick lists replacing entry fields, one-time entry of information that then flows from one document to another. That’s why, at just the push of a button, AdminSys will create your purchase order and voucher for you.

Advantages are pretty phenomenal. It will take far less time to make a purchase, and, with features like centralized buying, often at a better price. Accuracy will be at an all-time high, and so will the integrity of MIS data.

“We’ve learned to handle change pretty well,” says Project Manager Jackie Feinberg. “And that’s good, because we’re in a growth spurt and moving in double time.”



Mexican Independence Day — was celebrated in style at the DDS Building. The two-hour program was filled with music from TRC’s own Pat Ayala and Mariachi Gaudalupano. Keynote Speaker, Dr. Ricardo Romo, vice provost with the University of Texas at Austin gave a thought provoking talk on the history surrounding the holiday. Special thanks go to the Hispanic Cultural Events committee for their behind-the-scenes effort in creating a successful event.

■ Photos: (right) Dr. Romo accepts a special recognition award from Dora Gonzalez-Cantu as Ester Argiano looks on. (left) Herlinda Sanchez gives a Mexican grita at the Diez Y Seis celebration at DDS.

NEW guidance for serving persons with Limited English Proficiency

New guidance has recently been published to remind health and social service providers that persons should not be denied services and/or benefits because they are Limited English Proficient (LEP). This is especially important in Texas because we have such a high population of people who speak English as a second language. The U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights (USDHHS-OCR) published the new guidance memorandum to address language assistance that may be required for effective communication with LEP persons.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI, prohibits discrimination in the provision of services by any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance on the basis of race, color, or national origin. TRC, as an agency, is currently operating in accordance with federal regulations, which require us to provide translator services for applicants and clients who have LEP.

“We are committed to ensuring clients are not neglected or denied services due to their LEP status,” said Commissioner Arrell in a letter to Ralph Rouse, Jr., regional director of the USDHHS in Dallas. “The Texas Rehabilitation Commission is always interested in sharing information which could contribute to enhancing our existing level of rehabilitation services to the people we serve.” Arrell also stated that he plans to make the information available to target audiences by publishing the Internet address in our newsletters and on our web page.

Employees are encouraged to read the entire document at HYPERLINK <http://www.hhs.gov/progorg/ocr/facts.html>. You can access the information from the Intranet or through a link in our online edition of the TRC Today. If you have any questions, please call the TRC Office for Civil Rights at 512-424-4411.



Diez Y Seis de Septiembre



Catch the giving spirit

Just about everyone has heard the song "Deep in the Heart of Texas." Well, here's a chance for state employees to reach deep into their hearts and help someone less fortunate.

The State Employee Charitable Campaign (SECC) runs through October and is an easy and efficient way to make voluntary, tax-deductible contributions to charities through payroll deductions or one-time donations. The campaign involves many charities and offers broad choices in giving.

Last year, state employees contributed more than \$4 million and \$43,000 of that came from TRC employees. This was an increase in the amount pledged from 1996 of nearly 19 percent statewide and 45 percent in TRC. TRC received awards for the last two years for having the highest participation statewide.

"It's an easy, efficient and effective way for state employees to partner with the charitable cause they want to support," said TRC Chief of Staff, Charles Schiesser, as he kicked off the campaign in Central Office on Oct. 1. "Only \$2 per month could help prevent homelessness for a family of three in need of emergency food, rent or utilities. This demonstrates the power of one. Your contribution may not make a difference in everyone's life, but it can make a difference in one."

TRC's goal this year is for every employee to participate either through payroll deduction or a one-time contribution. Please contact the SECC representative in your region if you need more information.



Letters...Letters...Letters...

A client's stepdaughter recently wrote this letter about VRC John Nichols in the East Austin F.O.

...my stepfather had a severe stroke which left him paralyzed on his right side. ... TRC and Mr. John Nichols entered our lives like an angel. With the loss of my stepfather's income, my mother would have been unable to get him the care that he so wanted and deserved. Mr. Nichols helped get Tom a wheelchair ... and all the other items that he needed to make him independent and confident that things were going to be all right. ... His life has been severely altered, but we truly believe that with rehabilitation he will be able to be just as independent, if not more so, in the future. I will never be able to express how much the help from TRC has meant to me and my family, but most of all to Tom. ... I thank you and Mr. Nichols for all your help and caring through this ordeal.☺



Across the State

Welcome Aboard - August/September 1998

Jayne Bull, admin. tech.
Rita Galvan, HR clerk
Charles Hamlett, III,
systems programmer
Jennifer Glisan,
system support specialist
Arthur Gonzales, RST
Julieta Cervantez, RST
Connie Jackson, counselor
Traci Roemer, counselor
Valerie Fletcher, RST
Norilda Trevino, RST
Sally Diehl, counselor
Eileen Helley, RST
Karen McDowell, counselor
Sharon Davis, RST
Victoria Waddleton, counselor
Poppy Nutt, admin. tech.
Anna Ramos, DST
Mary Quiroz, DST
JoAnn Hernandez, secretary
Yvonne Williams, clerk
Gregory Miller, network specialist
Andrew Sanchez, counselor
Oscar Primm, counselor
Nina Mason, RST
Paula Crowe, RST
Mary Caskey, RST
Susan Fairbrother, counselor
Keith George, counselor
Carol Stepp, RST
Joyce Reeves, RST
Sandy Aylieff, RST
Raymond Gerson, counselor
Ermila Leija, RST
Vianney Valle, admin. tech.
Arturo Maldonado, DE
Nicole Louis, DE
Paul Finch, DE
Thelma Milligan, DE
David Sandeful, DE
Pamela McAlpin, DE
Elizabeth Perkins, DE
Daniel Washam, DE
Yvonne Harrison-August, DE
Gary Eargle, DE
Jacquelyn Davis-Dozier, DE
Michael Diaz, DE
Jennifer Vera, DST
Susan Marke, DE
Marianne Pool, DE
Cheryl Bailey, DE
Imelda Cantu, DE
Judith Davis, DST
Carol Forrester, HR specialist
Sondra Gillo, DST
Amy Trone, DE
Jacquelyn Hartsfield, DE
Mary Wright, DE

Retirements

August 31, 1998

Dennis W. Dunlap, assoc psych III,
Abilene Field Office
Larry G. Key, counselor, Abilene Field
Office

Barbara Ballard, Counselor, Amarillo
Field Office

Robert Wade Carmack, counselor,
Longview Field Office

Billy Feltman, program administrator,
Lufkin Field Office

Dorothy Briley, DST, Initial Unit 03,
DDS

Isaac J. Ramirez, disability examiner,
Initial Unit 10, DDS

September 30, 1998

Hope Black, RST in the Marshall
Field Office

Gloria Aldrette, HR specialist in the
San Antonio Regional Office

Robert G. Burgess, disability hearings
officer, Office of Disability Hearings,
DDS-Austin

Gary H. Mobley, program specialist in
Initial Unit 13, DDS

Gene Gorham, program administrator,
Recon/CDR Unit 35, DDS

Deaths

Lester E. "Buddy" Fields passed away
on Thursday, Oct. 8, 1998. A long-
time Commission employee who
retired in 1992, Buddy contributed
greatly to the work of this agency
through his management of the TRC
Print Shop.

Janis Beard, former director of
Facilities Management and Staff
Services, passed away Saturday, Oct.
10, 1998 of complications following
heart surgery. In 1993, Janis retired
and moved to Palestine, Texas, after
she worked with TRC for 20 years.

Congratulations!

Three employees of TRC DDS
received prestigious recognition at the
annual meeting of the National
Association of Disability Examiners
(NADE):

Glenda Croom, Operations Unit
supervisor (Unit 70) received the John
Gordon Award for superior
performance of a supervisor.

Leslie Hendren, disability examiner,
received the Charles O. Blalock
Award for extended efforts and major
contributions toward the advancement
of NADE.

Paula Pfister, training officer, received
the Frank Barclay Award for
significant contributions to human
resource development.

Dean Crawford, disability examiner,
was elected as Chair of the NADE
Council of Chapter Presidents. He
has been active in TADE (state
chapter) for about five years and is
the current TADE president elect as
well as the president elect of SWADE.

■ In the photo are Region II employees who received "Unique Contributions" awards for innovation, creativity, time savings, money savings and improvements to VR. (left to right) Front row: Marlene Owens, VRC; Jackie Callicoatte, MSS; Cathy Garner, RST; Carroll Norton, RST; Zack Hilliard, VRC; Back Row: Robert Marx, RD; David Freemyer, VRC; Brenda Graham, Area Manager; Jean Ross, RST; Pat Davis, AST; Lori Justice, RST; Phyllis Holsinger, RST; Liz Torres, RST; Bill Cupit, Program Specialist. NOTE: Theresa Gilbreath, RST (not pictured).

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Address Service Requested

trc today

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Shayla Fleshman, Director of Public Information
Prissy Pense, Editor

Visit us online at
<http://www.trcnet/trctoday/online.html>

State Service Awards

September/ October 1998

10 Years

Marilyn Bowen
Luther Byrd, Jr.
Jacinta Cowan
Marie Annette Williams
Sue McBeth
Connie Gilkey
Tracy Damon
Rose Harris Young
John Nichols
I Jane Duncan
Stephanie Jenkins
Humberto Martinez
Virginia Aldridge-Imbriani
Laura Cassens
Jacob Coy
Linda Dreyer
Daniel Labrado
Lisa Martin

15 Years

Glenda Collins
Susan Antoniewicz
Kimberlee Kingston-Durgin
Ruby Rhodes
Carolyn Valdez
Cecelia Eudy

20 Years

Deborah Arbuckle
Michael Creech
Shirley Lafleur
Peggy Jean Wierzbicki
Maria Rutledge
Nancy Corley
Barbara Bates
Barbara Burdette
Glenda Croom
Gloria Garcia
Steven Stump
Perry Watson

25 Years

Duane Mitchell
Donna Danz
Jose Lawrence
Gwendolyn Mayes
Richard Howard
Mary Lopez
Janet Mack
Jessie Johnson

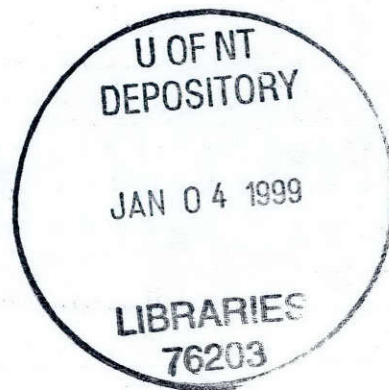
30 Years

Jesus Franco
Patricia Robinson
Nancy Murray
Carol Brown
Gloria Wilson

35 Years

Charles Stevens

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